

Yeltsin calls for urgent Western help

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin appealed Tuesday for urgent Western economic help to save democracy in Russia, declaring: "June... may prove too late." Mr. Yeltsin, speaking at a joint news conference with French President Francois Mitterrand, said last week's session of the country's top legislature showed communist forces were out to avenge themselves for their defeat in the 1991 coup. "I believe the Western world and Western countries did not understand the reality of revanchism before the eighth Congress (of People's Deputies)," Mr. Yeltsin said. "Russia not only needs support today but urgently. We cannot wait for Tokyo in June or July. It may prove too late." Mr. Mitterrand suggested Group of Seven (G-7) leaders meet as soon as possible after Mr. Yeltsin's summit with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Vancouver on April 4 to discuss Russia's problems. They were not due to meet until an annual summit scheduled for Tokyo in July. Mr. Mitterrand, the first Western leader to meet the Russian president since his political defeat at the four-day congress, held two hours of talks with Mr. Yeltsin Tuesday.

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Holidays announced

AMMAN (Petra) — All ministries, government departments and public institutions will be closed from Monday, March 22, till Friday March 26, a communication issued Tuesday by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shakar said. The closure will come in observance of the 'Eid Al Fitr feast marking the end of the holy Month of Ramadan. The 'Eid starts either Tuesday or Wednesday.

Qadhafi protests killing of Bosnians

CAIRO (AP) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi on Tuesday summoned the ambassador of former Yugoslavia and told him that the killing of Muslim women and children in Bosnia-Herzegovina must stop. Libya's official news agency IANA said Colonel Qadhafi gave the envoy a protest letter to deliver to his government. "The world's conscience cannot bear the continuous... killing of children, old people and women and the expulsion of civilians in bad weather conditions so they are forced to walk long distances on snow," Col. Qadhafi said in the message. He called for a quick end to "this unique tragedy in human history." Col. Qadhafi said Libya wants to play a role in ending the strife in former Yugoslavia and asked the warring parties to explain the roots of the conflict.

U.S. Marines kill Somali in Mogadishu

MOGADISHU (R) — U.S. Marines shot dead a Somali who had shot and wounded a Marine in a busy market in central Mogadishu Tuesday, the U.S. military said. The Marines, on patrol through the Bakara market, saw two Somali men apparently test firing Kalashnikov rifles, which are still on sale under the counter in Mogadishu despite attempts to round up unlicensed weapons. The Somali opened fire and the Marines chased them. One Somali dropped his rifle and escaped but the other man crouched behind a tool shed, aimed his rifle at the Marines and fired one shot, wounding the Marine in the left shoulder. "The Marines opened fire and killed the Somali," a U.S. military statement said.

Sudanese protest at closure of college

CAIRO (R) — Student protesters have clashed with police in Khartoum over the Sudanese government's takeover of a branch of Cairo university, Egyptian staff returning from Sudan said Tuesday. Amr Magid, an administrator at the university, told reporters at Cairo airport that the students had shouted slogans against Sudan's government and demanded the return of Egyptian supervision of the college.

Turkey: Russia may threaten neighbours

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel warned in an interview published Tuesday that Russia could threaten its newly independent neighbours and urged the United States to continue to play an active world role. In a notably frank outline of Turkey's strategic preoccupations, Mr. Demirel said the conflict between liberal and nationalist ideas lay at the root of instability in Russia and republics which won freedom from the former Soviet Union. "Will the Russian Federation... give up the Caucasus, Central Asia, Ukraine and the Baltic Republics? Or is its mind still fixed on these areas? If it is, then there is a big problem," he told the English-language Turkish Daily News.

20 indicted in Turkish murders

ISTANBUL (R) — The public prosecutor demanded death sentences Tuesday for two Islamic radicals accused of murdering journalists and attempting to subvert Turkey's constitution by force. The prosecutor also asked the state security court to pass prison sentences of 10 to 15 years on 18 other Muslim fundamentalists for forming an illegal organisation, complicity in murder and armed robberies.

Israeli soldiers, settlers kill 2, wound over 70

OCCUPIED GAZA STRIP (Agencies) — Israeli troops and settlers shot dead two Palestinians and wounded over 70 Tuesday, the heaviest casualties for three months.

Police Minister Moshe Shabai, reacting to a surge in Palestinian attacks, vowed revenge for every Israeli killed by an Arab. Soldiers in the Gaza Strip killed a 13-year-old Palestinian youth and wounded at least 70 other Arabs during clashes, hospital officials said. Jewish settlers went on a rampage through at least two villages in the occupied West Bank, smashing cars to avenge the death of two settlers in a hit-and-run accident, Arab reports said.

Tuesday's shootings were the latest in a violent outburst that has claimed the lives of six Israelis and eight Palestinians in the last two weeks.

Extra soldiers and police were to be deployed around the country and the occupied territories to contain the unrest, Israel radio reported. It said the decision was

made at a special meeting of security officials Tuesday morning.

Reports said Jewish settlers shot and killed Nasser Ali Abu Eiseh, 22, of the West Bank's Nur Shams refugee camp Monday night.

Salma Thabet, the wife of a Palestinian peace negotiator Thabet Thabet, said her husband found Abu Eiseh's body as he drove home to Tulkarem. She said Mr. Thabet was attacked by the settlers after he got out of his car to see if the man was alive. "They beat him up and smashed his car windows," Mrs. Thabet told the Associated Press.

West Bank police spokesman Yusef Fares said police were investigating the death. The Israeli Itim news agency said settlers found Abu Eiseh's body and alerted soldiers who took it away. On Monday a minibus driven by a Palestinian hit and killed two Israelis near a Jewish settlement. Settlers called it an attack but the army said it may have been an accident.

Settlers, who fear current Mid-

die East peace talks could lead to withdrawal from occupied Arab land, protested outside the prime minister's house Monday night as part of a campaign to bring down his government.

Another Palestinian died when soldiers opened fire on stone-throwers after a curfew was lifted in Khan Younis in the occupied Gaza Strip Tuesday, Israel Radio and Arab reports said. He was identified as Saeed Ali Salmi, 13.

The clashes occurred while prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was in Washington to discuss the U.S.-brokered Middle East peace talks with President Bill Clinton. Mr. Shabai, under pressure to quell a rise in Arab attacks on Israelis, said all police leave was cancelled and shifts had been extended to 12 hours.

"We mourn the death of every (Israeli) victim and we will avenge the death of each and every one," Mr. Shabai said. "But one answer we have. The answer is first of all in the morale of the citizens, we'll not allow the

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Palestinians disappointed over outcome of Clinton-Rabin talks

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Palestinians expressed dismay and disappointment with President Bill Clinton Tuesday, accusing him of pro-Israeli bias and saying he would have to do more to bring them back to Middle East peace talks.

Chief Palestinian peace talks spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi, commenting on Monday's meeting in Washington between Mr. Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, accused the pair of ignoring the Israeli expulsion of Palestinians that is threatening to undermine the negotiations.

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials in Tunis expressed disappointment, saying Mr. Clinton had come up with nothing that would enable Palestinian delegates to accept an invitation to return to the negotiating table in Washington on April 20.

Palestinian groups in Damascus urged outright withdrawal from the talks. Hundreds of Palestinian exiles, languishing in South Lebanon for nearly three months, flatly refused to believe that the two men had ignored them.

"I thought at least they would address the obstacles," Dr. Ashrawi told Reuters.

Palestinians have refused to return to the peace talks, which Mr. Clinton wants to resume April 20, in protest at Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion of 415 Palestinians to Lebanon.

Mr. Clinton said after meeting Mr. Rabin in Washington they had not even discussed expulsions (see separate story). "It is obvious that they are trying to shove the deportee issue aside and concentrate on other things," Dr. Ashrawi said.

"It is not enough just to say they hope the Palestinians will come back," she told Reuters. "There are some ingredients to the peace process that are still missing."

The Palestinians want a guarantee that Israel will not in future resort to expulsions — a punishment the United States has acknowledged is a violation of international law.

In Tunis, PLO Executive Committee member and spokesman Yasser Abed Rabbo said the PLO hoped the United States would show more balance.

The Rabin-Clinton meeting

suggests that such balance may have been lost, and this adds a new complication and puts the whole peace process in big danger," he told Reuters.

Another executive committee member, Saleh al-Najjar, said: "We do not consider there is anything in Clinton's statement that could help remove the obstacles and permit us to take part at the next round of the negotiations."

George Habash, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) leader, said in Damascus that Mr. Clinton's statements "constituted a new obstacle to the peace process."

Dr. Habash, who heads a 10-member alliance opposed to the talks, urged Palestinians to pull out and escalate the five-year-old revolt against Israeli rule in the occupied territories.

"We urge Palestinians to pull out of all talks with Israel and to refer the Palestinian problem to the United Nations."

Washington has said it stands by a January U.S.-Israeli deal under which Israel agreed to return a quarter of the expellees

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Former Somalia premier says split is permanent

ADDIS ABABA (R) — A former Somali prime minister and respected nationalist politician said Tuesday the north and south of the shattered Horn of Africa country could not be reunited. Mohammad Haji Ibrahim Egal told a U.N.-sponsored national reconciliation conference on Somalia it had no mandate to discuss the situation in the breakaway Somaliland republic.

"Now we have to accept the fact that Somaliland is a separate nation and the south should concentrate on solving its own problems," he was quoted by delegates as telling the conference.

Somaliland declared independence from the rest of Somalia following the borders of former British Somaliland shortly after rebels drove dictator Mohammad Siad Barre from power in January 1991.

The north, dominated by the Somali National Movement (SNM), has been spared much of the clan bloodletting that has destroyed the south. But no other Somali group and no foreign government recognised its independence.

Mr. Egal, one of Somaliland's top politicians, became prime minister of all of Somalia after Italy granted independence to the south in 1960.

"I am one of those who strove to unite the north and south in the 1960s. We tried it, and it did not work," he said.

SNM rebels fought Mr. Siad Barre from 1982 to 1991. Northern cities were bombed flat by Siad Barre's Soviet-made MiGs. The reconciliation conference in Addis Ababa, capital of neighbouring Ethiopia, is the broadest gathering of its type since Mr. Siad Barre was overthrown.

It brings together more than 200 feuding warlords, clan elders, religious leaders, and independent Somalis.

The U.N., strongly supported by Washington, is pushing for agreement on the creation of regional administrations which would be responsible for policing and basic amenities in their respective zones.

Washington is keen for an accord before it hands over to the U.N. leadership of a multinational force protecting famine relief supplies from civil war looting.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali has proposed May 1 for the handover. The Security Council has not yet agreed on a mandate for a U.N. operation.

Both the U.N. and the United

Iran rebel shot dead in Rome

ROME (Agencies) — An Iranian opposition leader was shot to death in Rome Tuesday in what the Foreign Ministry called a "vile attack," blamed by his supporters on Iran's Islamic government.

Mohammad Hussein Naghdi, the representative in Italy of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, was shot twice with an automatic weapon by a man riding on the back of a motorbike.

Mr. Naghdi's group immediately accused Italy of providing insufficient police protection and urged the Italian government to ask the U.N. Security Council to punish Tehran.

The Iranian embassy denied any government involvement in the assassination. Iran's state-run Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), in a brief report on the killing, said "observers" in Iran believe Mr. Naghdi was probably the victim of disputes among opposition groups.

The assassination was the latest in a series of killings of opponents of the Islamic government in

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CAIRO BLAST: Security Forces keep tourists away from their damaged coaches outside Museum Tuesday after a bomb exploded underneath one of the vehicles (see story below) (AFP photo)

Rabin cuts short U.S. visit after offering partial Golan pullout

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin decided Tuesday to shorten his visit to the United States and to return to Israel Thursday to deal with spreading violence in the occupied Gaza Strip.

Mr. Rabin had planned to remain until Sunday. But a violent upsurge in Gaza has claimed the lives of six Israelis and eight Palestinians.

Gad Ben Ari, the prime minister's spokesman, said, in light of the violence Mr. Rabin had decided to cut short his visit after important meetings in Washington and in New York. Mr. Rabin was having another meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher later Tuesday.

He was supposed to go to Mississippi Friday and due to be the chief speaker at a convention of the American-Israeli Public Affairs Committee in Washington Sunday before flying home. On Monday, President Bill

Clinton's first personal intervention in Mideast diplomacy produced an offer by Mr. Rabin to pull back on the Golan Heights — if Syria provides the right terms.

Mr. Clinton offered assurances after he met Mr. Rabin that he would ask Congress to keep aid to Israel steady at \$3 billion a year, and he promised to maintain Israel's military edge over the Arabs.

Mr. Clinton also acted to strengthen ties in science and technology with Israel and, significantly, backed Israel's demand for full peace with the Arabs. He said full peace includes diplomatic relations, open borders, commerce and tourism.

Mr. Rabin, interviewed Tuesday on ABC's "Good Morning America," reiterated a willingness to negotiate. Asked about a possible negotiated withdrawal from the Golan Heights, Mr. Rabin offered no details, but said Israel "accepts the principle that peace can be achieved by compromises, compromises by both sides... our purpose is to achieve peace and

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Syria press dismisses Rabin's 'manoeuvres'

DAMASCUS (AP) — The state-run press Tuesday dismissed as "manoeuvres" Yitzhak Rabin's statement that Israel is ready for a compromise deal with Syria to relinquish part of the Golan Heights.

The English-language Syria Times said Damascus would continue to press for a comprehensive deal involving all the parties in Middle East peace talks — not a separate peace with Israel. "It is peace for all or not," the daily wrote.

"Rabin's manoeuvres are no more than a leap into the air, because the Syrian strategy is a longstanding one within which the Palestinian cause occupies a focal point," the Syrian Times wrote.

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2 more suspects sought in New York bombing

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Two more suspects, including an Egyptian taxi driver, are being sought in connection with the bombing of the World Trade Centre last month, according to a source close to the investigation.

The source, who spoke on condition he not be identified, told Reuters the men were tied to a Muslim group that investigators believe was responsible for the Feb. 26 bombing, which killed six and wounded more than 1,000.

More than two weeks after the bomb ripped through the base of the centre, authorities recovered a sixth body in the rubble Monday.

The victim was identified as Wilfredo Mercado, 37, a building worker who was last seen in the

basement parking area where the bomb exploded. The first five victims were found within hours of the explosion at the 110-storey twin towers.

Specially trained dogs had gone into the blast area eight times over the weekend searching for Mercado, a Peruvian immigrant who was an employee of the centre's Vista Hotel.

Workers searching the debris in the underground parking garage first saw a boot sticking out of the debris, and then dug up the body, said Mark Marchese, spokesman for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which owns the complex.

Thousands of tonnes of rubble sit at the bottom of the huge bomb crater. The debris was

being removed slowly, in shoebox size containers, so federal agents could check it for clues.

Two people — Mohammad Salameh and Nidal Ayyad — have been arrested in connection with the bombing investigation. There had been speculation earlier in the investigation that one or more of the bombers might have died in the explosion, but police have never confirmed that.

One of those being sought was identified by the Daily News newspaper as an Egyptian cab driver in New York. Police confirmed his identity to Reuters but stressed that he was not being charged with involvement in the crime.

The man lived in Brooklyn and

Gunmen kill former Algerian minister

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Gunmen killed former Algerian Education Minister Djilali Liabes Tuesday as he left his home in a Muslim fundamentalist bastion in Algiers, the official news agency APS said.

The authorities later Tuesday denied that a serving minister had been killed.

Quoting "an authorised source," Algiers Radio said Sports Minister Abdul Kader Khamri had not died in an attack Tuesday.

"Contrary to what Reuters reported today the youth and sports minister was not the victim of an attack according to an authorised source," the radio said.

A spokesman for the national gendarmerie earlier told Reuters that Mr. Khamri had been killed in Algiers.

Mr. Liabes, 43, was killed when he was hit by three bullets in the head in Ben Omar near Kouba, a teeming residential area set on a hill near the city centre, the agency said quoting witnesses.

He was the highest ranking official to be killed since Head of State Mohammed Boudiaf was assassinated last June, and was the second senior man to be shot in two days in the same suburb.

"The attack was carried out around 9:15 a.m. (0915 GMT) by three individuals," the agency said.

Mr. Liabes was shot by three gunmen who fled, APS said. The gunman shot him three times in the head, witnesses said.

Ben Omar is in southeast Algiers near Kcaba, a stronghold for Muslim fundamentalists who have been tightly suppressed by the military-backed government for more than a year.

Mr. Liabes, who left government last July to head the National Institute of Strategic Global Studies, was among intellectuals known to be sympathetic with the army-backed committee running the country and against the fundamentalists.

He was recently named head of the "Group of Experts 2015," which was to have drawn up a study on Algeria's future.

Mr. Liabes' murder was the second attack on a politically prominent intellectual in three days.

has U.S. residency, but some associates said they have not seen him in the past year.

Both men being sought are believed linked to a Muslim group that follows Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, an Egyptian cleric who has called for the overthrow of the Egyptian government.

Followers of Sheikh Abdul Rahman in Egypt are charged by police with involvement in violent attacks that have killed nearly 100 people in the past year.

U.S. followers of Sheikh Abdul Rahman, who lives in exile in Jersey City, New Jersey, told Reuters Sunday that their group has been under surveillance since

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Bomb explodes outside Cairo museum; no-one hurt

CAIRO (Agencies) — A bomb damaged five tourist buses outside the Egyptian museum in central Cairo Tuesday in what appeared to be a new attack by Muslim militants fighting to overthrow the government.

Police sources said the bomb caused no casualties. Reuter correspondent John West reported from the scene that the explosion shattered windows in five buses parked outside the museum, which houses the world's finest collection of pharaonic treasures including the gold funeral mask of King Tutankhamen.

The bomb had been planted in or under the luggage compartment of one of the buses. Police sources said it blew a hole 25 centimetres deep in the asphalt of the parking lot.

It was the second blast on Tahrir Square this year. On Feb. 26, a bomb that exploded in a coffee shop across the square killed three people and wounded

more than 15. The dead were a Swede, a Turk and an Egyptian, and two Americans, a Canadian and a Frenchman were among the wounded.

The coffee-shop bombing was blamed on Muslim extremists. Unlike the coffee-shop bomb, the device that exploded Tuesday did not appear to have contained nails or other projectiles meant to injure people.

Most tourists leaving the museum stopped to look at the damaged bus and take pictures of it.

Dozens of black-uniformed policemen cordoned off the area after the explosion. Riot police wearing helmets and armed with rifles and sticks followed on the scene to keep curious onlookers away.

The government's Middle East News Agency said security officials searched in and under nearby buses but found no other explosive devices.

No group immediately claimed responsibility and an Interior

Ministry statement on the blast made no accusations. But the bomb matched a pattern of attacks by Muslim militants which have devastated the country's vital tourist industry since last July.

The militants of Al Gama'a al Islamiya (Islamic Group) are fighting to overthrow the government and turn Egypt into a purist Islamic state.

People in Tahrir Square outside the museum panicked and ran when the bomb exploded at about 1 p.m., shortly before the afternoon rush hour.

"We were inside the museum when we heard a bang. We came out and there was a lot of smoke," tourist James O'Neill from Dundee, Scotland, told Reuters. "Everyone was running towards the buses."

A diplomat who rushed to the scene from the nearby headquarters of the Arab League said: "It was a small thing. It caused panic among the people and a big noise but no casualties."

Visitors to the museum, which stayed open despite the attack, included 172 Canadian navy servicemen on leave after protecting famine relief operations in Somalia.

Gama'a militants shot dead a British woman in their most serious attack on tourists, an ambush on a bus near the southern Egyptian town of Dayrout in October, and they injured five Germans when they shot at another bus in the town of Qena.

But a series of gun and bomb attacks on buses since then in Upper Egypt and Cairo has caused no casualties and the Gama'a said its aim is to undermine the government by damaging the tourist industry, not to hurt tourists.

Egyptian security forces have cracked down with increasing force on the group, led by a blind preacher in New York whose alleged followers have been im-

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His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday hosts an iftar banquet in honour of non-commissioned officers from the Armed Forces, the Public Security and Civil Defence departments. Prince Hassan and the invitees performed Al Maghreb prayer. The Crown Prince conveyed to the audience the greetings of His Majesty King Hussein.

Crown Prince receives visiting Pakistani naval crew docked in Aqaba

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday received at the command of the southern region the crew of two visiting Pakistani navy ships now docked at Aqaba port.

In his meeting with the Pakistani servicemen, the Crown Prince stressed the close relations binding Jordan and Pakistan and conveyed to them His Majesty King Hussein's greetings and best wishes for the people of Pakistan of further progress and prosperity.

The meeting was attended by the Pakistani ambassador in Amman, the commander of the two ships, the president of the Aqaba Region Authority, the Aqaba district governor, the chief of staff of the land forces, the chief of staff of the Royal Air Force, the commander of the southern region and the commander of the Jordanian Marine Force.

The commander of the two ships told Jordan Television that the three-day visit by the two ships comes at an invitation by the Jordanian navy commander.

"We have very friendly ties between Pakistan and Jordan and the Jordanian navy commander invited us to visit, and we are very happy to come here," he said.

"In fact, this is the first visit by any Pakistani ships to Jordan and I am very proud that I am commanding these two ships on our first visit to Jordan. I thank you for the hospitality that we have

been extended here by everyone, the people, the navy and even His Majesty's inquiring about our welfare and we have had a very wonderful trip," he added.

Prince Hassan delivered an address at the meeting in which he welcomed the Pakistani crew and commended Jordanian-Pakistani ties.

"It is a privilege for us to host you in this first visit of the senior service to Jordan," the Crown Prince said adding, "We have established close brotherly relations in the many years of the true and tested relationship between our armed services, with the Pakistan army and I am proud to say that a twinning arrangement exists between the fourth battalion and the 14 battalion of the Pakistani army as indeed twinning arrangements exist between two of our squadrons of the Pakistan air force and the Jordanian Air Force, the sixth and the 18th."

"But this is the first navy visit in difficult times for the umma (the Islamic Nation). It is reassuring for us to feel that our brethren in Asia and brethren in Islam and (faith) give us the opportunity of receiving them in the Holy Month of Ramadan, and in particular in the last few days of Lailat Al Qadr and in deed Al Jum'at Al Yateema or Jum'at Al Wid'at (the last Friday of Ramadan) as it is called in Pakistan," Prince Hassan said.

Teacher trainees continue sit-in at UNRWA centre

Protest action brings attention to new qualification standards

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Students undergoing teachers training at a U.N. agency facility in Amman continued a sit-in protest for the fourth day Tuesday, kindling fresh debate on a problem faced by thousands of teachers in Jordan.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Thouqan Hindawi said he was planning to raise the issue with the Council of Ministers during Tuesday's regular session.

The protesting students at the Amman Training Centre of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine refugees are demanding that the agency provide a quota for employing some of them at its various schools and others be allowed to continue studies at the institution and secure a degree which will qualify them for employment as teachers in Jordan.

A decision adopted by the First National Conference on Education held in 1988, demands that all teachers in Jordan should be holders of a university degree in teaching and that diploma holders would not be employed as teachers.

The decision means that diploma holders already working as teachers should "upgrade" themselves with a university degree or face retrenchment by the year 1997, when the measure goes into effect.

"There is no definite law regarding this point," said Mr. Hindawi. "At any rate, I am going to raise the issue during today's (Tuesday) Cabinet session."

Informal officials said meanwhile the government was planning to extend the so-called deadline for the implementation of the decision.

"It is possible that the Ministry of Education might extend the deadline to the year 2,000 instead of 1997, in view of the number of teachers involved and the limited training facilities available in Jordan," said a well-informed source.

It is estimated that around 28,000 diploma-holding teachers are now working in government schools alone. In addition, several thousand others are employed by community colleges and other institutions.

The Amman Training Centre, established in 1968, has already secured government approval for its teachers training courses to be recognised as university education carrying a degree with effect from the 1993-94 scholastic year.

In the meantime, the centre plans to let the current two-year diploma courses continue, allowing the secondary-school students to complete the course this term and the first-year students to enter the second year and complete the course next year.

The problem faced by the facility, as explained by UNRWA officials, is: It needs to give priority to its own 1,800-strong teaching staff in the "university grade" courses to comply with

the decision at the conference on education law and therefore is unable to provide enough seats to fresh students.

The officials explained that the centre could offer only 275 seats and that it had proposed to set aside 75 seats for fresh students.

Omar Ghabayen, deputy field education officer of UNRWA in Jordan, said that the centre had a capacity of 275 students and it was unable to take more since it did not have the physical facilities.

"It would need more buildings, staff and funds," said Mr. Ghabayen.

"The decision rests with the UNRWA headquarters and policymakers," he told the Jordan Times.

In the meantime, he said, "we are helpless," adding that "it is mainly a government problem and not a UNRWA problem."

"If the government changes its policy and goes back to approving the employment of diploma holders, then we will be in a position

to settle the problem."

Denis Brown, director of UNRWA affairs in Jordan, described the sit-in action as "very passive."

Mr. Brown noted that UNRWA, despite being a U.N. agency with administrative independence, had to follow government guidelines and regulations, and as such, it was unable to meet the students' demands.

"The students are protesting against government policy" and not UNRWA decisions, he said.

Matar Saqar, UNRWA public information officer, said senior UNRWA officials held a round of talks with the students Saturday but no solution was forthcoming.

"We are keen to end the strike and resume normal activities at the centre," he said.

The protesters said to include both first- and second-year teaching students at the centre, are trying to lobby Parliament into intervening on their behalf and solving the problem.

In the meantime, "mischievous

elements" were blamed for causing an uproar among parents some of the female students strike.

"Apparently the parents were not aware of the protest action at the centre," said one informant.

"Someone called the parents some of the female students and informed them that their daughters were 'not attending' classes, suggesting that they may be involved in 'immoral' activities."

"Some of the fathers were enraged and came to the centre to find out what their daughters were doing," said the source adding that he could not confirm reports that some of the angry men carried guns in largely typical reaction to suggestions that their daughters could be behaving "immorally."

Told that their daughters were only involved in a passive student protest action, "they understood the situation and went away without creating problems," according to the source.

House speaker discusses Mideast peace with visiting Canadian envoy

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arabiyat Tuesday praised Canada's role in advancing the cause of peace and called on the Canadian government to play a major role in enhancing international cooperation and advancing understanding between the world's nations.

At a meeting with the visiting deputy director of the Canadian Foreign Affairs and International Trade Department, Dr. Arabiyat said Jordan seeks a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East question.

He emphasised the need to solve the Palestinian expellees problem and to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Dr. Arabiyat said peace talks have not so far achieved any tangible progress, noting in this regard that conferring parties have failed to reach an agenda.

This, the House speaker said, shows that Israel is not interested in establishing justice, freedom and recognising the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish their own state on their national soil.

Dr. Arabiyat reviewed Jordan's democratisation process, saying that democracy is the option of the people and the leadership of Jordan, and that there was no scope to retract from such an option.

He pointed out that the establishment of a centre for studies on freedom, democracy and human rights in the Arab World was the culmination of Jordan, a democratic march.

The Canadian official lauded Jordan's firm and principled stands, and voiced hope that all obstacles facing the resumption of the peace talks be overcome.

He praised the democratic path Jordan has charted.

Most returnees await U.N. restitution before considering investing in Jordan

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Over forty per cent of Gulf war returnees are awaiting war restitution before deciding to invest their money in the Jordanian economy or not, according to a recent Department of Statistics study conducted among some 70,000 returnees who came to Jordan after August 1991.

About 16 per cent of the returnees polled said that they intended to begin investment ventures in Jordan, 38 per cent said they did not, and 45 per cent said they had "not yet decided."

Returnees have claimed about \$3 billion in restitution from the U.N. Compensation Commission in Geneva.

Most of those asking for com-

pensation are expected to invest in Jordan in the construction, trade, industrial or agricultural sectors.

Of those polled, 42 per cent said they intended to invest in commercial ventures, 24 per cent intended to invest in the services sector, 7 per cent opted for the agricultural sector and 4.5 per cent chose the industrial sector.

More than half the returnees who were questioned in the survey had spent more than 20 years as expatriates in Kuwait and said that, on the average, they had lost about JD 10,000 as a result of their sometimes-forced return to Jordan.

The vast majority of Jordanian and Palestinian returnees were told that they could no longer work or live in the Gulf state of Kuwait in the post war period.

Their savings and experience in the computer, banking and services sector is said to have boosted standards in the Kingdom in those given sectors, according to a Ministry of Labour official Mohammad Abdul Hadi Al Akle, who is in charge of processing the returnee restitution claims to the U.N. Compensation Commission in Geneva.

Of the more than 70,000 Jordanians and Palestinians who returned to Jordan from Kuwait between August 1991 and December 1992, about 19,199 were active members of the work force, and 12,470 were students above the age of 15. The rest were under 15, homemakers or unemployed.

According to the Department of Statistics census, 30.25 per cent

of the returnees who were in the work force were "specialists" technicians.

Another one third, or 28.34 per cent, reported that they had worked in production services and 21.57 per cent reported that they had been employed in clerical posts.

Ten per cent of the returnee surveyed said they had worked abroad.

Only one-fourth of those returnees questioned owned property in the Kingdom, although almost all settled in Jordan.

Of the over 70,000 returnees questioned, only 1,446 settled in the West Bank.

About 40,000 settled in the Amman governorate, 18,000 settled in Zarqa, 8,880 settled in Irbid and 1,682 settled in the Balqa governorate.

Activists call for unprejudiced U.N. representative to defend human rights

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Human rights activists Monday called on Arab countries and humanitarian organisations to adopt a better system for exchanging information and to seek to have an unbiased representative at the U.N. to defend human rights issues.

The activists, attending a two-hour round-table organised by the Arab Organisation for Human Rights in Jordan, said the Arab perspectives on human rights should be better formulated and presented at a June meeting in Vienna on human rights.

On the internal front, they said, there is also a pressing need to familiarise Arabs with the seriousness of human rights violations.

"If we do not put an end to the human rights violations that occur in our (Arab) countries, we will hear the same rhetoric from our children 20 years later," said Suleiman Sweiss, a human rights activist.

All Omleil, general secretary of the Arab Thought Forum, suggested that part of the U.N. budget be allocated for a "commissioner on human rights who will have full authority to investigate human rights violations without bias or selectivity."

The proposal, seconded by human rights activist and lawyer Asma Khader, was in reference to an issue also raised by other speakers at the round-table: Israel getting away without punishment even after its violations of the U.N. over its violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people living in the occupied territories, while Arab and other countries taken to task for their record on human rights.

The round-table heard loud expressions of "deep concern over imperialist and Zionist practices" and over the "double-standard policy" superpowers apply against underdeveloped countries.

"Tens of resolutions were passed by the United Nations condemning the Israeli practices in the occupied territories, but still none of them was fully implemented," said Imad Shargawi, a Jordanian lawyer.

"Selectivity and double standards might end up in greater violence and explosions," warned Laila Naffa, a human rights activist. "We (in the Arab countries) should not follow the same steps (of the West), we should work towards more objectivity and credibility."

Some participants at the conference, mostly researchers and political party leaders, criticised what they consider as focusing upon other peoples' causes rather than concentrating on the Jordanian case.

"There are 13 organisations in the occupied territories whose basic task is to defend human rights... what we need in these kind of meetings is a thorough research of human rights conditions in Jordan, tackling political parties, women's rights, confiscation of hooks and press and publications law," said one participant.

Another participant, tackling the situation and crises that face the Arab World from an economic point of view commented that it is because of the 'greater freedoms' we used to enjoy in the past in the Arab countries that we prefer to tackle human rights violations in other countries rather than looking upon the situation in our country."

Munir Hamarneh, a professor of economics at the University of Jordan, added: International policies are denuding underdeveloped countries of their major resources so as not to lead a dignified life; and not anybody even in Parliament, would dare say no."

Dr. Taleh Awad, a Jordanian researcher and writer warned of the serious implications of the World debts that rose from \$92 billion in 1972 to more than \$1,300 billion in 1990 in addition to funds that go primarily to armaments instead of development.

The agreement also encourages cooperation in the area of sports for the handicapped.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Road accidents decrease in 1st week of March

AMMAN (Petra) — Three people were killed and 147 injured in 354 road accidents, which took place in various parts of Jordan during the period Feb. 27 through March 6, according to Traffic Department sources. The sources said Amman ranked first in the number of accidents with 211 cases, followed by Zarqa with 43, and Irbid with 32. Maan and Tafleeh governorates recorded the lowest number of accidents, with one accident each. The sources blamed the accidents on tailgating, reckless driving, violation of traffic priorities (right of way), neglect, failure to abide by road signs, wrong overtaking and speeding. But the sources said the reporting week witnessed a decrease in the number of accidents, deaths and injuries, compared with the week ending Feb. 25.

Senior American medical team arrives in Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — A three-man senior medical delegation from the United States will arrive here Friday on a four-day visit to Jordan in response to an invitation extended to them by the Arab Centre for Heart (ACH). Dr. Floyd Loop, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Dr. Bernardine Healey, director of the National Institutes of Health in Washington and Dr. Mehdi Razavi, chairman of the International Centre at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, will hold talks with senior Jordanian officials. They will also discuss scopes of scientific and practical cooperation between the ACH and the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. The team's programme includes a visit to Hussein Medical Centre and a lecture on cardiac diseases and surgery.

White cement is up for sale again

ZARQA (Petra) — The white cement factories Monday started offering white cement to distributors and merchants in the Kingdom, according to the director general of the company. In a memorandum sent by the director to the governor of Zarqa, the director called for coordinating efforts in providing citizens with their needs of white cement without any complications. He said the production of white cement at the factories was stopped for a short period because of annual maintenance works at various parts of the factory.

House administrative panel reviews citizens' complaints

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament Administrative Committee Tuesday held a meeting and discussed several proposals and complaints by citizens. Committee rapporteur Fuad Al Khalafat said the committee also discussed in action by some ministries to reply to complaints sent to them by the committee.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- Scientific exhibition of projects designed by students at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST), including computers and computer programmes, at JUST.
- Exhibition entitled the Memory of Silk, displaying traditional Jordanian and Palestinian costumes, shawls, carpets, pottery copperware, from the Widad Kassar collection — at the French Cultural Centre.

FILM

- British film entitled "My Left Foot" at 7 p.m. at the British Council (96 min.).

Japanese envoy, spouse visit NHF

AMMAN (J.T.) — Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Yoji Ikeda and his wife Tuesday visited Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), and were briefed by its president and its director general of NHF income-generating projects implemented in the area of integrated and comprehensive community development in Jordan.

Both sides also reviewed Japan's assistance to the foundation which has included an observatory and a mini-planetaryarium for the Haya Arts Centre and volunteer instructors at the NHF National Music Conservatory.

Mr. and Mrs. Ikeda then watched a slide presentation on NHF development projects and programmes in the areas of family and community development, women, children, culture and heritage, and education.

The presentation also highlighted NHF's philosophy which draws on reinforcing self-reliance, securing steady income for families and integrating women into the developing process.

Mr. and Mrs. Ikeda then toured the Jordan Design and Trade Centre.

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Peace — Israel style

THE VISIT of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to the United States seems to have achieved what was expected of it: More tangible U.S. support for the peace process and a much more forceful pledge to its security and other needs.

Compare the force of this commitment to the shy and lukewarm statements in support of international demands on Israel to comply with U.N. resolutions, and the obvious conclusion is that the Arabs should be more — and not urge — more U.S. involvement in the peace process.

The tilt of the new U.S. administration towards Israel, which was so clearly demonstrated during Mr. Rabin's joint press conference with President Bill Clinton on Monday, is at best disappointing, and at worst alarming, about the future of the peace process and the hope for finding a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

President Clinton promised Mr. Rabin a continued U.S. commitment to Israel's military superiority in the region, initiated with him a dialogue to raise the U.S.-Israeli relationship on a new level of strategic partnership and will send the Israeli prime minister home with a pledge to maintain the billions of dollars which his country receives from Washington.

President Clinton did in fact reiterate his country's intention to keep the peace process alive. But the kind of peace he spoke of seems to be the one advocated by the Israelis — and no one else.

The president said he wanted a peace that "will fully accord Israel the recognition and acceptance that its people have yearned for so long and have been denied." But he did not say the peace that he should end the suffering of Palestinians, who for so long also, have been subjugated to all kinds of oppression and denial of rights.

He said Israel should live in security, but he did not say it should meet its obligation under international law to speak against terrorism, but he did not speak out against the demolition of homes and the expulsion of people from their homes and homeland and the killing of children and unarmed civilians.

Peace in the Middle East, said the president, should be based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and "it must involve full normalisation of diplomatic relations, open borders, commerce and tourism... the Israeli people cannot make peace unless they feel secure."

What Mr. Clinton forgot, or chose to forget, to mention, however, is that the Arabs too cannot make peace unless they feel secure and unless they feel their rights are respected and guaranteed. "I believe that the Israelis know that the United States has had a historic relationship of friendship with Israel, but also that we can be counted upon to keep our word," he said.

The president is only half right on this point. The Arabs do know the extent of the friendship that binds them to the United States. But they have yet to find a good enough reason to know that they can count on the credibility of the United States.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

ARABIC PROPAGANDA media have been reporting negotiations between security forces in Israel to confront the intifada in the occupied Arab territories. Al Ra'i Arabic newspaper said in an editorial Tuesday. These negotiations have indicated the possibility of a cease-fire around the occupied territories, suggesting that plans to increase oppressive measures in the occupied territories, said the paper. These measures are not security measures, said the paper, they are organised terrorist practices. It is pointing out, said Al Ra'i, that news of these measures came at a time when the scheduled date for the ninth round of Arab-Israeli talks is nearing and when the possibilities of international U.S. effort to solve the problem of the Palestinian intifada have increased. It is obvious that the real objective of the increase in terrorist activities to creating more provocative incidents in the face of the peace process so that it will not be implemented. Al Ra'i said the intended measures also aim at destroying the morale of the Palestinian people. The leaking of the intention of these measures also coincided with Israeli Prime Minister Rabin's visit to the United States. The United States, said the paper, realise the role it can play in convincing Mr. Rabin to drop the terrorist programme which he intends to carry out in the occupied territories. Security in the occupied territories, said the paper, cannot be achieved through terrorism. It can be achieved by pushing the peace process forward and an Israeli commitment to implementing U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and to the principle of land for peace.

THE escalation of the intifada, and the improved effectiveness of the resistance movement to Israeli occupation, has led to an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, said an editorial in the Arab daily. The more voicing of these calls, especially by members of the Israeli cabinet, is a moral victory for the Palestinian people whose sacrifices have not been short in coming, said the editorial. But as we do not expect these calls to be heeded by the Israeli government, we expect that with the continuation of the intifada and the increase of resistance activities, Mr. Rabin will be forced to withdraw from any part of the occupied territories has been occupied, or to coming true, said Al Dastour.

Economic Forum

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

Reflections on economic liberalism

THE JORDANIAN economic system has been based on economic freedom which was probably the major force behind whatever economic success Jordan achieved throughout the last three decades. At the eve of the 21st century, it looks crystal clear that economic liberalism is the norm of the day and the trend of the future.

Being poorly endowed with natural resources, Jordan needs economic liberalism more than, or at least as much as, any other country in the region. We believe that the comparative advantage of the Jordanian economy lies in two main areas: the quality of its manpower and its geographic location. Without a liberal economy, Jordan cannot exploit either of them. This and the smallness of the domestic market mean that the Jordanian economy is essentially a service economy.

An open economy and a liberal economic system will allow factors of production to move freely inside Jordan and across borders and thus add more value to the services component of the economy.

However, there is no perfect version of economic liberalism in real life. And probably, such a version cannot be tolerated anywhere. It is not only that such liberalism does not, and must not, mean or lead to chaos, but also that the degree of liberalism must be adapted to the ever changing economic circumstances and problems.

Thus, economic liberalism is a very relative concept which varies in shape and content from country to country and from time to time.

Consequently, economic liberalism is not rarely misunderstood. The danger lies in the belief that it is a magic core for all economic ills. It is not difficult to detect the early symptoms of this syndrome in Jordan.

The philosophical content of the present economic policy seems to lean heavily on the notion that economic liberalism enhances resource allocation and utilisation (good) and that the more you liberalise, the better results you reap. Wrong: because after a certain point, liberalism generates excesses and socio-economic imbalances.

Economic liberalism has found a point where to stop in most advanced liberal economies, meaning conclusively that economic progress, and probably social justice, are not an unconditional function of economic liberalism. Besides, once a country installs this or that form of liberalism in this or that field, no economic rule compels it to stick to that course. No formula of liberalism constitutes the final solution.

In Jordan, it seems that economic freedom and liberalism have been equated with a free import policy or gauged by it. Elimination of protectionism is another important measure which we seem to equate with that liberalism. Protection policies have been recurring in the economic policies of even the most liberal economies. Imports of goods shot up by an alarming 30 per cent in 1992. Instead of spurring us to work out direct or indirect measures to check the unbridled growth of imports, we seem to have embarked on measures which will stimulate more imports.

We have just cut tariff rates on a host of imports and are playing with the idea of abolishing import permits altogether. This is what can be termed an obsession with economic liberalism despite powerful indications that point us to completely different policies. In the absence of discriminate policies based on changing circumstances, economic liberalism can take the economy to any places, nice or dreary alike.

France

Back to 'cohabitation'?

By Pascal B. Karmy

THE WORD "cohabitation" was used by the French in 1986 with respect to the political co-existence, at the head of the French government of Socialist President Francois Mitterrand and Prime Minister Jacques Chirac of the Conservative Gaullist Party (RPR).

It may be recalled that in March 1986, the rightist Conservative parties including the RPR, the Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF) and other rightist parties came to power as they formed the majority in the Assemblée Nationale while President Mitterrand's term of office had almost two more years to run.

It may also be recalled that some frictions occurred between the Socialist President and the Gaullist Prime Minister. The root cause of the friction arose from the fact that the Fifth Republic's Constitution, as established by General De Gaulle in 1958, had conferred wide powers upon the president who is elected for a seven years' term directly by universal suffrage and not by the National Assembly as was the case in previous republics prior to 1958.

According to De Gaulle's Fifth Republic Constitution, the president appoints the prime minister and executive ministers, presides over the council of ministers, signs laws and decrees, can dissolve the National Assembly,

hold referenda on important questions and ratifies treaties among other matters.

De Gaulle's constitution did not apparently foresee the case where the elected president could be of one party and the majority of the National Assembly of a different political party.

Opinions differed on cohabitation: former President Giscard d'Estaing and the then influential minister Charles Balladur expressed the opinion that "cohabitation" must succeed and that there was no reason why it should not and that it was a new experience in French constitutional history. Other politicians, like former prime minister Raymond Barre, a rightist, stated that the president of the republic should resign once the opposition majority party comes to power.

It may be recalled that President Mitterrand remained in power but had some frictions with his prime minister Jacques Chirac.

One of the incidents of friction which had happened between the president and prime minister Jacques Chirac was when the former refused to sign the decrees referred to him on the privatisation of certain government public establishments after the decrees had

been passed by the council of ministers. The prime minister simply referred the decrees to the National Assembly which, because of its then existing rightist majority, approved them and consequently the president had to sign them into law.

It appeared that during Jacques Chirac's premiership in 1986, he tried to give the president a representative protocol role only, but it is doubtful whether he succeeded as the president continues to enjoy wide powers, especially in matters of foreign affairs and national defence. As is well known, De Gaulle, with his towering influence and prestige, had been able to lay down France's policy in foreign affairs and defence and I do not believe that any president will relinquish his role in those two sensitive fields.

Even President Mitterrand, who had harshly criticised De Gaulle's Fifth Republic Constitution before he became president, especially with regard to the strong powers of the president, abided by the constitution during his two terms of office and did not propose any amendment to it. But with his second term of office nearing its end in less than two years, he has now proposed the abrogation of article 16 of the

constitution. According to this article, the president, after consulting the prime minister, the presidents of the National Assembly and the senate as well as the Council Constitutionnel, will take the required measures in case the institutions of the republic, the independence of the nation, the integrity of its territory or the execution of its international obligations are seriously and immediately threatened.

An observer may ask why President Mitterrand is proposing the abrogation of article 16 at this late stage of his second term of office. Is he afraid that, as the recent polls in France indicate, the Conservatives might obtain the majority in the National Assembly during the current month's general election and that a Conservative president might be elected after he finishes his current term of office? Apparently, out of office, President Mitterrand would not like to see a president exercising dictatorial powers even in the specific emergencies described in article 16.

If a Conservative majority dominates the National Assembly as a result of the current general election, we will witness again for "some time" another "cohabitation" between a Socialist president and a rightist Conservative prime minister.

Pascal B. Karmy is an Amman-based writer who occasionally contributes to the Jordan Times.

Yeltsin Walking a fine line

By Thomas Ginsberg

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Boris Yeltsin has a knack for springing back from political defeat. But the president will have to be in top form to continue his market reforms after the hard line Congress blocked his play for ultimate power.

Anti-Yeltsin rallies, including one Sunday of about 200 people at the U.N. embassy, seem oddly redundant. The protesters carried Soviet flags and portraits of Stalin and Lenin, and shouted "Yeltsin, shame."

Russia is not on the verge of returning to ideological Communism or the Cold War, nor did the Congress' victory last week spell total defeat for the president and his programme.

But the congress has thrown up new obstacles and shifted power toward itself.

Mr. Yeltsin must now appeal to an apathetic public and win the support of regional leaders, most of them entrenched ex-Communists. Legislators will challenge every step, including the acceptance of Western aid.

The government is now between a rock and hard place, said pro-reform lawmaker Leonid Gurevich. "The prime minister will now have to listen simultaneously to orders from both Yeltsin and parliament speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov. This is very stupid situation, fraught with the most serious consequences."

Dominated by ex-Communists led by Mr. Khasbulatov, the Congress repealed Mr. Yeltsin's power to issue decrees without legislative review. It also cancelled his plan for a nationwide referendum on who should rule Russia.

The standing legislature, the Supreme Soviet, will press the attack when it reconvenes, possibly this week. Some members may revive efforts to remove Mr. Yeltsin's aides, including the pro-Western Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.

The Supreme Soviet probably will not backtrack significantly on market reforms, which have created a small but vibrant class of entrepreneurs. The Congress also had agreed to share authority over the Central Bank and other agencies with the Cabinet.

But the Supreme Soviet could use its veto power to block new steps and stall others. One casualty could be plans for private land ownership and accelerate the fledgling privatisation programme.

The legislature also might resist foreign aid. Hard liners distrustful of the United States argue that large scale assistance would buttress Mr. Yeltsin and turn Russia

into a beggar nation. "The problem for Russia does not consist in getting aid," Mr. Khasbulatov told the Congress before it adjourned Saturday. "The problem is in setting up serious, businesslike, mutually beneficial cooperation with the West."

U.S. President Bill Clinton called last week for bigger aid packages from the United States and other major industrial powers to be sent immediately. He hopes the aid will help Mr. Yeltsin, but it might be too late.

Mr. Yeltsin's most extreme option is declaring some kind of presidential rule and dissolving the Parliament. Most lawmakers and officials say he does not have the political or military backing to pull it off.

A more likely step is a plebiscite or nationwide poll which aides have proposed for as early as next month. It likely would ask whether Russia should be a "presidential republic."

A vote in Mr. Yeltsin's favour could provide a moral and psychological boost to take some kind of firmer action, such as calling for early elections or convening an assembly to rewrite the Soviet-era constitution.

The cabinet already has allocated money and materials for the April 11 referendum. It was unclear, however, whether it would attract the requisite 50 per cent of voters to be valid.

An opinion poll by the respected All Russian Centre for Public Opinion Research, conducted in February, found only about one third of voters eager to take part in such a ballot, according to Russian television Sunday.

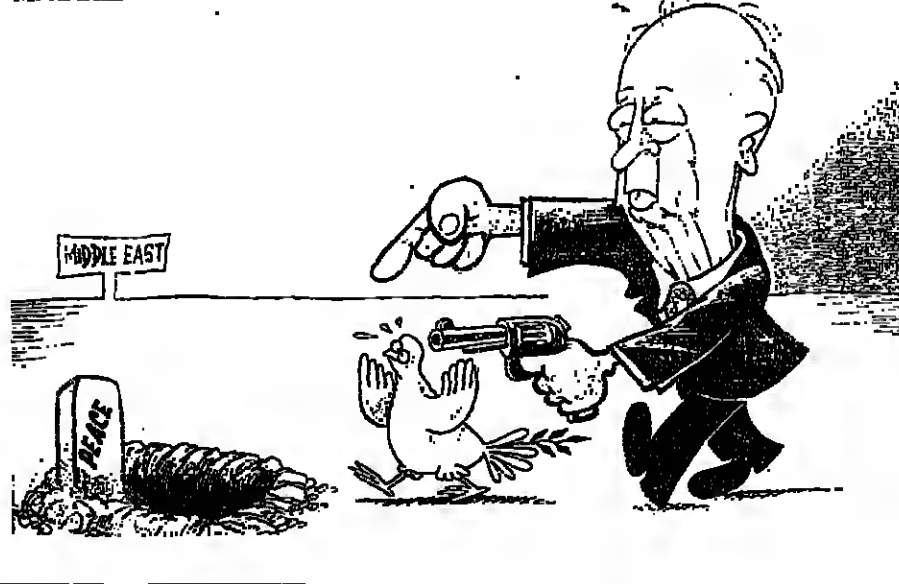
Asked whether they supported the president or parliament, 70 per cent said they were undecided, a higher number than in previous polls. Only 20 per cent said they sided with Mr. Yeltsin and 10 per cent with lawmakers.

Russian television cited no margin of error. Mr. Yeltsin might have other options. His aides and supporters in Congress plan to ask the Constitutional Court to review possible violations of the Constitution by the Congress.

He also is trying to build alliances with leaders in Russia's regions, territories and autonomous republics to ignore or even recall Parliament members.

That, however, might boost the power of local officials. Said Mr. Gurevich: "The worst thing is that both the president and Congress are trying to get support from the regions, and that means that the split in Moscow will spread."

M. KAHIL



Israel's policies

From sadistic to nihilistic

In the less than three months since the mass deportation of over 400 Palestinians, Israeli forces and civilians have killed over 50 Palestinians, and wounded hundreds. More than 10 children under the age of 16 have been killed in the same period; representing a disturbing 180 per cent increase.

B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights organisation, claims that two-thirds of the recent deaths occurred during incidents when according to the Israeli army's own admission, the lives of the soldiers were not in danger. A U.N. official stated that 90 per cent of the casualties have been shot in the upper half of the body by live ammunition. Other reports have shown that in a study of 13 confrontations between Israeli troops and Palestinian youth, in which many Palestinians were killed and wounded, 11 were provoked by Israeli forces and two by the Palestinians.

The young Israeli army recruits, recently graduated from high school, having absorbed a racist education, obviously intend to make the Palestinians pay for their own anger and fear.

The use of collective punish-

ment is also markedly on the increase. Over 20 Palestinians' homes have recently been demolished by anti-tank missiles, to bring arbitrary havoc and damage. Gaza Strip was recently completely closed off, denying over 30,000 Palestinian day-labourers their only means of income. Such measures serve only to increase the levels of frustration, anxiety and hate, discrediting the peace process and undermining the credibility of the Palestinian negotiators.

The subsequent inevitable cycle of Israeli violence and Palestinian resistance effectively creates the very conditions necessary to "justify" Israel's more extreme policy aims. The Israeli government intends to forego a peaceful solution and instead impose its own draconian solution to what it perceives as its "Palestinian problem": the imposition of Israeli hegemony over the occupied Palestinian territory. To ensure a Jewish majority, transfer or "ethnic cleansing", "voluntarily" or forcefully, will be continued to get rid of the indigenous Palestinian people.

The hope that a voice of reason or compromise might emerge from within Israel was shattered

when the meagre "peace forces," represented by the Meretz coalition, sold their soul in a Faustian pact with Mr. Rabin over the mass expulsions. Other "forces for good," such as the human rights organisation B'Tselem, denounced the "excesses" of the occupation, but still fail to establish that Palestinian resistance is a reaction to the occupation. This failure is essentially in line with the Israeli national consensus, which condemns Palestinian resistance as "terrorism" and limits criticism of the occupation to legal technicalities, as with the mass deportation. Yet still, B'Tselem and A.C.R.I., which issued the restraining orders against the expulsions, are castigated as disloyal by the press, or as agents of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) by Mr. Rabin.

Some Israeli personalities have spoken out, but the ensuing castigation of them has usually been swift. A Hebrew University military historian recently stated that the Palestinian population has a right to fight the Israeli occupation, and that if Israel continues to pursue the same policies, it is "likely to get into civil war." His audience

reaction was so strong that the speaker was compelled to walk off the stage.

Another example of a 'voice in the wilderness,' is professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz, who was and still is an ardent Zionist. He was considered a modern Jewish prophet until he criticised the occupation immediately after 1967, when he predicted the "dilemma of the occupier and the occupied." Mr. Leibowitz, has often spoken out against the "corruption of the occupation," and he characterised the Israeli army as "Judeo-Nazi."

When criticised for this in a recent Israeli television programme, he retorted that the "concentration camps" are in tens of detention centres in which thousands of Palestinians are incarcerated. When asked, "where is the holocaust?" Mr. Leibowitz answered, "in your minds." Later, he was forced to forsake the Israel Prize for his scientific achievements due to the vehement denunciation of his nomination by a cross section of Israeli society, including Mr. Rabin who emphasised that he would not attend the ceremony.

The pressure to prevent Israel from deepening this cycle of vio-

lence, and from prolonging the masochistic infliction of suffering on its own population, must surely come from the powerful "friends of Israel," the United States administration and the European Community, both of whom publicly profess to support the search for a peaceful and just peace. Up to now, both powers have not only failed to address the issue of Israel's excesses and its undermining of the peace process, but have effectively facilitated these excesses by rejecting a U.N. attempt to assign a human rights commissioner to monitor the war crimes Israel is perpetrating.

Ultimately, it is not important whether their reluctance to ensure Israel's respect for international law, the Geneva Conventions and the U.N. Security Council stems from their belief that only through appeasement will Israel make peace, or, from their historic guilt over the Holocaust, manipulated by Israel, which they feel may be absolved by allowing Israel to commit the very same outrage against the Palestinians.

What is important is that their current policies are enabling Israel to promote a vortex of violence which threatens to permanently undermine the search for peace in the region.

The road to such a nihilistic eventualities is opening up. The brutalisation of Palestinian children, who decorated Israeli tanks with olive branches and changed the barrels of Israeli guns into vases of flowers at the beginning of the peace talks is one of the cruelest aspects of the occupation. Figures show that among these children there is very little belief of a chance for coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians.

In terms of the future, this is tragic, though understandable; for these children are now running out of hope and patience.

Ultimately, the violence will engulf everyone, preventing the political solution which Israel wishes to avoid. Whether it succeeds in this will be determined by the international community, which should be asked for how long it will watch Palestinians being killed and abused, and sympathise with the perpetrator rather than the victim?

The writer, general director of the Jerusalem Centre for Development Studies, occasionally writes for the Jordan Times.

Clinton pledges full American involvement in peace process

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Expressing hope that 1993 will be "a year of peacemaking in the Middle East," President Bill Clinton says the United States "is prepared to be involved all the way" through the Middle East peace process.

At a joint news conference with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin Monday, Mr. Clinton also expressed support for a solution based on governing United Nations resolutions.

Following is the official White House transcript of the Clinton-Rabin news conference:

Clinton: It's a great pleasure for me to welcome Prime Minister Rabin back to Washington. Since we first met here last August, much has changed. But one thing I can say definitely will never change is the unique bond that unites the United States and Israel. It is a bond that goes back to the founding of the state of Israel and beyond, based on shared values and shared ideals.

Israel's democracy is the bedrock on which our relationship stands. It's a shining example for people around the world who are on the front line of the struggle for democracy in their own lands. Our relationship is also based on our common interest in a more stable and peaceful Middle East, a Middle East that will finally accord Israel the recognition and acceptance that its people have yearned for so long and have been too long denied; a Middle East that will know greater democracy for all its peoples.

I believe strongly in the benefit to American interests from strengthened relationships with Israel. Our talks today have been conducted in that context. We have begun a dialogue intended to raise our relationship to a new level of strategic partnership — partners in the pursuit of peace, partners in the pursuit of security.

We focus today on our common objective of turning 1993 into a year of peacemaking in the Middle East. Prime Minister Rabin has made clear to me today that pursuing peace with security is his highest mission. I have pledged that my administration will be active in helping the parties to achieve that end.

At the same time, Prime Minister Rabin and I agree that our common objective should be real, lasting, just and comprehensive peace, based on Resolutions 242 and 338. It must involve full normalization, diplomatic rela-

tions, open borders, commerce, tourism — the human bonds that are both the fruits and the best guarantee of peace. And Israel's security must be assured. The Israeli people cannot be expected to make peace unless they feel secure, and they cannot be expected to feel secure unless they come to know real peace.

Those like Prime Minister Rabin who genuinely seek peace in the Middle East will find in me and my administration a full partner. But those who seek to subvert the peace process will find zero tolerance here for their deplorable acts of violence and terrorism.

Prime Minister Rabin has told me that he is prepared to take risks for peace. He has told his own people the same thing. I have told him that our role is to help him minimize those risks. We will do that by further reinforcing our commitment to maintaining Israel's qualitative military edge. Another way we can strengthen Israel and the United States is to combine the skills of its people with those of our own.

I am pleased to announce today the establishment of a U.S.-Israel science and technology commission, chaired on the American side by our secretary of commerce, Ron Brown. The commission will enhance cooperation to create technology-based jobs for the 21st century in both Israel and the United States. Our economies will also benefit from a lifting of the Arab boycott. And I hope that this boycott can end soon.

Prime Minister Rabin, this year will be a year of enhanced relations between our countries. It should also be a year of peace in the Middle East, as you have declared. We have an historic responsibility and an historic opportunity. We stand here together today resolved not to let that opportunity pass.

Rabin: President Clinton, in just a few days I will return to Israel, but I know, and will tell everyone in my country, Israel has a friend in the White House. Our home is many miles away, but Mr. President, we feel very close. We thank you for the hours we spent with you and your team, for the atmosphere of friendship and the openness and the depth of our discussions. The leadership which you have displayed in coping with America's domestic problems is inspiring and stands out like a beacon in the night.

Today we were happy to learn that at the same time you are also willing to invest efforts in promoting peace and stability in the Middle East. In this effort, Mr. President, you will find us to be full partners. You are aware that no one wants peace more than us, and that there is no country more resolved to defend itself when necessary. We are veterans of many wars. And today we say, no more blood and tears. We now wish to experience lasting and meaningful peace.

In our talks today, I presented to you Israel's approach to the peacemaking, and we are willing to take upon ourselves risks for peace. But we are determined to protect our security.

Peace has many enemies. Terror is used by the enemies of peace in (an) effort to undermine it. And we will combat it while we continue to seek a solution that will lead to peace.

Since the formation of my government, we have invested efforts in trying to advance towards peace in the framework of the Madrid formula. We introduced new ideas in the negotiation tracks with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians. Some progress has been made, but more is needed in order to come to agreement. We are ready for compromise, but compromises cannot be one-sided. We call on our partners, the Arab states, the Palestinians from the territories, to seize the moment to return to the negotiating table so that we can use this historic opportunity.

We call upon them to respond openly and willingly to our positions. Our children and grandchildren in Jerusalem, and the Arab children and grandchildren in Damascus, Beirut, Amman and elsewhere in the Arab World will not forgive us if we all fail to act now.

We have heard today with satisfaction, Mr. President, your concept of the role of the full partner as an intermediary. We shall continue our direct talks with our Arab neighbours. But in order to expedite the dialogue between the parties, we welcome your good offices and hope to rely on your role as facilitator.

President Clinton, we are deeply indebted to you and your predecessors who helped us in hours of need. We do appreciate and greatly value the decision to maintain the current level of aid to Israel. This decision will help us to integrate new immig-

rants into our society and to bear the heavy burden of our security.

You know, president (sic) that we will not be able to win the battle for peace without a qualitative edge. Therefore, I wish to thank you and your colleagues on behalf of the Israeli soldiers and their parents and the citizens of Israel for your decision to help to maintain that edge.

Moreover, such a qualitative edge enables the Israeli Defence Forces to contribute to the overall effort to maintain stability in our stormy region. The decision today to raise the level of strategic dialogue between our two countries will open new doors of opportunity. The fact that the next months we will renew the memorandum of agreement between us for five more years, and that we do it as a matter of course is a proof of the kind of mutually beneficial relationships that we enjoy. The formation of new high-level forum for strategic dialogue will further upgrade this relationship.

We will also have a turn in the near future with much urgency to address the struggle against various kinds of fanaticism, which give birth to murderous terror, the kind that recently landed even on these shores. We must institutionalise our dialogue and include all free countries in consultations on the ways to curb the threatening extremism.

We attach much importance to the decision made today to create the high-level joint commission for the development of projects of science and technology. The investment in research and industrial applications in Israel and in America will explore new frontiers of knowledge. And they are a telling example of how our two countries can mutually benefit from this cooperation.

President Clinton, thank you for your invitation and reception, for the warmth on a winter day, and for your goodwill. I came from Jerusalem, the city of the prophets. I return to Jerusalem, the city that witnessed so many wars and wants so dearly peace, because she knows that in war, there are no winners, and in peace, no losers.

Question: — demands for the immediate repatriation of the Palestinian deportees, and where do you leave that subject?

Mr. Clinton: No, we did not discuss that. As far as I'm concerned, the secretary of state and

the prime minister reached an agreement on that. And I think that is the framework within which we are proceeding.

Q: Mr. President, the last peace agreement between an Arab nation and Israel was, as you know — in that case, the president kept a very personal part as an intermediary. To what extent are you willing to become personally involved? And, Mr. Prime Minister, to what extent are you willing to see the president become personally involved in this peace negotiation?

Mr. Rabin: Well, I still can expect — I cannot answer in the name of the president of the United States. But I believe, as it has happened whenever agreements were reached between the Arab countries and Israel from '74 to '79, and even the creation of the Madrid peace conference, could not be achieved without the United States being involved in encouraging the parties to do so. I believe that it was ... there is a need of the United States' partnership to the peacemaking process. At what level, at what time, it's not up to me to answer.

Mr. Clinton: The answer to your question is that I would be prepared to commit the resources, the effort and the attention of this administration, of my secretary of state, and my personal efforts to achieve lasting agreements.

We have, on the table, the potential of very significant bilateral agreements and the potential of some regional agreements that I think ought to be pursued. I feel very strongly about it, and I think the opportunities for progress are there. I don't want to minimize the difficulties, the obstacles, the years of frustration, but I think the fact that this prime minister, who became a hero as a warrior, is doing what he can and risking significantly to promote peace is a good beginning. And I think there are other good indications in the region. And I'm prepared to personally do what I can to facilitate that.

Q: Do you support the transitional — policy of self-determination for the people on the West Bank and Gaza who have been living for years under military occupation? Mr. Prime Minister, do you think that during your regime there will be any measure of self-rule for the Palestinians while you are...

Mr. Rabin: I don't want to give you a lengthy answer, but allow me to say, in 1967 we did not want war. It's more than that. Even when we found ourselves in a clash with the Egyptians, we offered to the Jordanians, stay out of the war and we'll keep your line with us without any change.

If you'll follow the history, we were always for compromise — U.N. decision, petition of Palestine to two states. We accepted, they rejected. They went to war to destroy us. It's bad luck to the Arabs — whenever they go to war, they lose. We offer them this time to the Palestinians in the territories what no one offered them when the Arab countries were in occupation — Jordan of the West Bank, Egypt of the Gaza Strip — self-rule: run your own life by yourself, as an interim agreement for a transition period of not more than five years, not later than the — we are ready to enter negotiations with them about a permanent solution based on Resolution 242 and 338.

What else can we do? By violence and terror no one will make us run. The solution should be around the negotiation table, by talks, not by weapons.

Mr. Clinton: The answer is the United States' position has not changed. As I said in my statement, we support a solution based on the governing U.N. resolution. But the important thing is that everything we say or do today sends a clear message, particularly to the other parties in the Middle East, that the time has come to negotiate peace. And the United States is prepared to be involved all the way through the process.

Q: — both of you have addressed the question of bilateral arrangements between Israel and Syria. It seems that the prime minister in recent statements has backed away from some earlier statements that Israel would never go down from the Golan Heights. Is there a change? Would Israel be prepared to accept a complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights in exchange for complete peace with Syria, along the lines of the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement? And would the United States welcome that kind of separate Israeli-Syrian agreement, even in advance of a Palestinian agreement?

Mr. Rabin: Well, first, we are serious in our negotiations, with every one of the Arab parties, and that, in the end,

for the peace negotiations. We are ready to negotiate and reach agreement with every one of the partners that sit around the negotiation table with us.

Second, peace has to be negotiated not between me, as the prime minister of Israel, and you, after all, you don't represent Syria. We made it clear that we accept the principle of withdrawal of the Armed Forces of Israel on the Golan Heights, to secure the recognised boundaries, but we'll not enter negotiations on the dimension of the withdrawal without knowing what kind of peace Syria offers us. Is it a fully-fledged peace, open boundaries for movement of people and goods, diplomatic relations including embassies, normalisation of relations? Will they let peace — stand on its own two feet, will not be influenced by what happens or doesn't happen in the negotiations with the other Arab partners?

Before we know that, why would I have to say how much we will withdraw once it is an issue to be agreed on between Syria and ourselves, with the assistance of the United States?

Mr. Clinton: The answer to your question, from my point of view, is that the United States believes that the full peace process should resume. We hope very much that the Palestinians will come to the table. We would like to see all the bilateral go forward. But if the parties could reach an agreement consistent with security interests and the governing U.N. resolutions that was their genuine agreement, would I welcome that and be prepared to support it? Yes, I would.

Q: Mr. President, the Arabs think that you favour Israel against them. What are you doing to balance this situation? We know that Secretary Christopher has gone there, but what specifically has been offered to them, and how would you see a confederation of Jordan with the Palestinians? And also, I would like to ask the response to that from Prime Minister Rabin.

Mr. Clinton: Secretary Christopher went to the Middle East, and I can assure you, one of the things that he did was to say the same thing to everybody in every capital that he visited — to say that the United States wanted to be a partner in this process, but that we recognise we had to be a mediator, and that, in the end,

the only thing that would make peace possible was the assurance of security that would come to the parties afterward.

I believe that the other nations involved know that the United States has had a historic relationship of friendship with Israel, but also know that we can be counted upon to keep our word and to do what we can to support the security of all the parties if an agreement can be reached.

Do you want to answer that?

Mr. Rabin: I can speak only as an Israeli, and in the name of Israel. I believe that the government that I serve as its prime minister is the first government that accepted the principle of the resolutions 242 and 338 as applicable to the achievement of peace. No government in the past did so — which shows that we understand that in peace, compromises have to be made by both sides.

Q: Mr. President, Prime Minister Rabin today spoke about raising the level of strategic dialogue; you spoke about strategic dialogue. I was wondering if you could elaborate what that means more, and does this mean greater coordination between the two countries in terms of what approaches to take to peace, and then bringing that to the table? Are we talking about a whole new approach here?

Clinton: No, we're not talking about a whole new approach. Our two governments have some very gifted people who work on a continuous basis on security issues between us and facing the region. But we know there are, looking ahead 10 years down the road, we know that we have to pay greater attention to missile defenses; we know that we have to pay greater attention to the possibility of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; we know that in order for any agreement in the Middle East to have lasting impact, there will be significant, and must be, significant security implications flowing out of any kind of arrangements which might be made. And we just want to make sure that beginning now we give those matters the most careful attention at the appropriate level.

This will not supplant anything that is now being done. We're very well satisfied with the work being done by our people now. But these three things, it seems to us, will shape a lot of our deliberations for a decade to come.

Rabin cuts short visit to U.S.

(Continued from page 1)

security, and this can be achieved by compromises on both sides." "Israel's security must be assured," Mr. Clinton said at a joint news conference with Mr. Rabin in the East Room. "The Israeli people cannot be expected to make peace unless they feel secure."

A White House official suggested U.S. assistance could increase from the \$3 billion level if Israel reached peace with its neighbours.

The official, briefing reporters on condition of anonymity, said: "If there is indeed a breakthrough to peace in the region, I think that will transform the environment, and there's a sense which the United States would then be prepared to help compensate Israel for the risks it would take to make peace."

A diplomatic source, however, said Mr. Clinton made no explicit promises to Mr. Rabin for any boost in aid.

Mideast negotiations are due to resume here on April 20. And the United States will take a more active role than it did in the eight rounds held during the Bush administration.

Mr. Clinton said the United States would not only "be a partner in this process" but would be a mediator, as well.

The president met alone with Mr. Rabin for 75 minutes. They were then joined by their aides for another two hours and 15 minutes.

Mr. Rabin was to meet with lawmakers, including key members of the Senate and House appropriations committees Tuesday.

Mr. Rabin emerged from the sessions with Mr. Clinton saying he was "ready for compromise" and was prepared to relinquish part of the strategic Golan Heights it had seized from Syria. But he said Israel would not negotiate a pullback in the territory without knowing Syria's peace terms.

Mr. Clinton said Mr. Rabin was prepared "to take risks for peace" and the Israeli leader confirmed it.

"We made it clear that we accept the principle of the withdrawal of the armed forces of Israel on the Golan Heights to a secure and recognised boundary," Mr. Rabin said. "But we will not enter negotiations on the dimension of the withdrawal without knowing what kind of peace Syria offers us."

He asked, for instance, whether it would involve an exchange of ambassadors and a normalisation of relations. "Before we know that, why do I have to say how much will we withdraw?" Mr. Rabin asked.

The administration is proceeding on the assumption Syria, Jordan and Lebanon would send delegations to the peace talks even if the Palestinians stayed away.

The Palestinians are demanding that Israel immediately repatriate 396 expellees forced into Lebanon in mid-December.

Clinton-Rabin talks dismay Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

immediately and the rest by the end of the year. The Palestinians, who say it was insufficient, were not consulted.

In contrast to strained relations between former President George Bush and Mr. Rabin's predecessor Yitzhak Shamir, the new leaders emphasised close ties between Washington and Israel.

In Amman, PLO Executive Committee member Tayseer Khaleel expressed dismay at the outcome of the Clinton-Rabin talks.

"These talks show the new U.S. administration's total bias towards Rabin's policies by encouraging Israel to continue shunning principles of international legitimacy and to continue violating human rights in the occupied territories."

Mr. Khaleel said the fact that they did not raise the expellee issue in their talks "was a clear proof that the U.S. is giving priority to developing ties with

Israel instead of looking into ways to remove obstacles placed by Rabin's government in the way of a balanced settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict."

In Damascus, Nayef Hawatmeh, leader of the Damascus-based Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), accused Clinton of trying to divide Arab countries.

"Clinton is trying to show that a unilateral solution could be achieved on the Syrian front to force other Arab parties especially the Palestinians to capitulate to U.S. and Israeli conditions for peace," he said.

Fathi Shukaki, head of the fundamentalist group Islamic Jihad to which many expellees belong, accused Mr. Clinton of "putting the interest of Israel above international law."

The 396 expellees still in South Lebanon were shaken by Mr. Clinton's statement that the expulsions had not been mentioned but vowed to stand firm until they could all return home together.

"I am surprised at such an announcement which no one believes," Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi told reporters at their muddy and ragged camp.

"The most important issue on the international arena is the deportees' case. I stress that our case was discussed between Bill Clinton and Rabin and it was the first issue in their talks."

In Tunis, a PLO advocate of Palestinian participation expressed profound disappointment.

"Our hopes have been dashed," he said.

2 more suspects sought in bombing

(Continued from page 1)

sought in the bombing was said by a neighbour Monday to have "carried himself like a militant sort of guy" and dressed in military fatigues and army boots.

Israel Campos described his former neighbour in Brooklyn's Day Ridge neighbourhood as being in his mid-30s and as having a commanding, strutting air. He said the man lived in the apartment below his until he moved a year ago.

Israeli soldiers kill 2

(Continued from page 1)

Palestinians and the Arabs and the terrorists to defeat us," he told Israel Radio.

The clashes in Khan Yunis began after a homemade bomb was thrown at troops as residents emerged from a curfew imposed last Friday, the army said. No soldiers were injured.

Fighting between stone-throwing Palestinians and soldiers spread throughout the

squalid camp. Witnesses said most of the Palestinians wounded appeared to have been hit in the legs by army snipers.

The local hospital said it treated 70 Palestinians for bullet wounds and admitted 50 of them, including four in critical condition. One was taken to Israel for treatment.

It was the bloodiest day in the occupied territories since Dec. 19, when six Palestinians were killed and 30 wounded in Khan Yunis in the aftermath of Israel's expulsion of Palestinians to Lebanon on Dec. 17.

Violence in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip has risen sharply since the expulsion of 415 Palestinians. In that period Israelis have killed at least 58 Palestinians and Palestinians have killed at least 10 Israelis. Palestinians and human rights groups, in turn, say indiscriminate shooting by soldiers has caused a sharp rise in the number of Palestinian deaths.

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JORDAN MARKET PLACE

Capriati ousted, Stich escapes, Chang upset

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida (R) — American teen Jennifer Capriati wiped away tears in her press conference after an early 3-6, 7-5, 6-4 third-round loss to Australian Judith Wiesner Monday at the \$3 million Lipton Championships.

Ninth-seeded Michael Stich came close to being the next upset victim but escaped with a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 decision over 73rd-ranked Frenchman Rodolphe Gilbert.

Earlier, defending champion Michael Chang, the seventh seed, was stunned by South African Marcos Ondruska 7-5, 6-1 in the second round. The seventh-ranked Chang wilted against the 48th-ranked Ondruska's powerful groundstrokes and finely-tuned volleys.

Other top seeds posted easy victories.

In men's second-round action, top-seeded Jim Courier of the United States won a 6-2, 6-2 decision over Byron Black of Zimbabwe. Third-seeded Stefan Edberg of Sweden defeated Mexican Leonardo Lavalle 6-4, 6-3.

In women's third-round play, second-seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain beat American Ann Grossman 6-0, 6-2. Third seed Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina took a 6-2, 7-5 victory over South African Dinky Van Rensburg.

The sixth-ranked Capriati suffered a frustrating and inexplicable loss.

"I can't believe I lost," said Capriati, 16. "I had high expectations. I'd say I'm very disappointed. I'm working hard and felt good coming to this tournament."

The 25th-ranked Wiesner pounded shots over and Capriati answered the assault just as her opponent hoped — with defensive attempts to keep the ball in play and frequent errors.

"She played well and got everything back," said Capriati, who is 2-2 against Wiesner in career meetings. "She didn't



A disappointed Jennifer Capriati

miss. I was the one missing. I could've been more aggressive on almost every shot."

"I had beaten her before, so I knew I could do it," said Wiesner of Capriati. "I never had a big win like this in '92 or this year."

Capriati has played in only three events this year because a stomach muscle pull kept her out of action in February. She started the year with a bang, winning the Sydney New South Wales Open title in January. She lost to Steffi Graf in the quarter-finals at the Australian Open.

For Wiesner, the 1990 finalist here, this is the fifth event of the year. Her best performance in 1993 so far was reaching the

semifinals at Linz, Austria.

The 10th-ranked Stich was surprised by Gilbert's excellent serving. Stich, the ace king, had 11 in the three sets. Gilbert came close with nine.

After losing the first set, Stich fell behind 2-0 in the second set. But he kept trying and broke even in the sixth game.

He scored the remaining two service breaks in the match — in the eighth game of the second set and the fifth game of the final set.

"I was very cold out there and found it tough to get into the match," said Stich. "He played very well and served really big. Once I broke him, I got into the match."

Australia names Davis Cup team

SYDNEY (R) — Jason Stoltenberg, rapidly climbing up the tennis rankings after a comeback from injury, was Tuesday named to Australia's Davis Cup team to play a below-strength United States in Melbourne this month. Stoltenberg, 22, joins the country's two top-ranked singles players, Wally Masur and Mark Woodforde, and Todd Woodbridge for the first-round tie against the defending champions to be played on grass at Kooyong from March 26-28.

He justified his inclusion in the team at the \$3 million Lipton Championships in Key Biscayne this week with wins over American team member David Wheaton and Spain's Emilio Sanchez in the first two rounds.

The Americans, represented in the singles by Wheaton and Brad Gilbert and backed by the leading doubles team of Jim Grabb and Richey Reneberg, arrive in Melbourne at the weekend.

Australian captain Neale Fraser said his team had a good chance against a depleted United States.

"I'm quietly confident, we will certainly be giving it everything we have got," he said in a news release.

Woodforde, the highest-ranked Australian at 22, also turned up for the cup tie with a second round 6-1, 6-3 victory at Key Biscayne over Switzerland's Claudio Mezzadri.

The top-seeded United States named their team after leading players, world number one Jim Courier, Andre Agassi, Michael Chang and Pete Sampras, refused to play.

Australia will be returning to the scene of their last Davis Cup triumph where it defeated highly-rated Sweden in 1986, thanks mainly to Pat Cash, who has been ruled out of this rubber by injury.

World Youth Soccer Championship England face semifinal injury problems

SYDNEY (R) — Under-prepared England are likely to face the precocious talent of African champions Ghana in the semifinals of the World Youth Soccer Championship Wednesday without two of their key players.

Tottenham Hotspur teenager Nick Barmby is still troubled by sore shins and a knee problem while Chelsea defender Andy Myers is in doubt with bruised toes.

Neither player joined the squad during an 80-minute workout Tuesday.

"At this stage you'd have to say Barmby was very doubtful and Myers was very doubtful," said England manager David Burnside.

The cast-iron England defence, which has only conceded one goal in four games and has been instrumental in taking them to the semifinal, relies heavily on Myers whose speed would be sorely missed against the fast and tricky Ghanians.

Oldham Athletic defender Marvin Harriott is likely to replace Myers while Leicester City's Jason Joachim will deputise for Barmby.

England will go into the match as underdogs against a Ghana side who easily despatched Russia 3-0 in the quarter-finals.

"Ghana are a well-organised team of outstanding individuals," Burnside said, ruling the fact that

his under-20 team had only played 12 games in three years before arriving in Australia.

In contrast, Ghana will field many of the players who won the Under-17 World Cup two years ago and who have in teenage Anderlecht star Nii Lamptey one of the most gifted players in world soccer.

In the second semifinal in Melbourne, Brazil, bidding from a record third tournament win, are favourites to beat hosts Australia with their coach Julio Leal saying his side has peaked at the right time.

"We don't have to improve too much because we are playing very well at the moment," said Leal, whose side easily whipped the United States 3-0 in the quarter-finals.

"We have got better with every game and technically we have organised ourselves very well."

But the Australians, who reached the semifinals in 1991, boast a creditable record against Brazil with one win and three draws in six games during the last four months.

Australian coach Les Scheffling said the Brazilians were beatable and claimed his players would not be intimidated by the opposition's lofty reputation.

"I saw the Americans get stage-fright against them," Scheffling said. "They let them do whatever they wanted to."

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Marseille look to Voeller and Boksic for goals

MARSEILLE (R) — French champions Marseille hope the return of the Rudi Voeller-Alen Boksic partnership will solve a chronic goal shortage when they meet CSKA Moscow in Group A of the European Cup Wednesday. Injuries to German Voeller and Croat Boksic have blunted the Marseille attack of late but both are expected to be fit again to face the Russians in a game where goals will be needed to boost their chances of reaching this year's European Cup final. Meanwhile Swedish champions IFK Gothenburg aim for a second successive victory over PSV Eindhoven Wednesday to boost their unlikely challenge to AC Milan for a place in the European Cup final.

Kasparov predicts exciting battle against Short

LINARES (R) — World chess champion Garry Kasparov Monday promised an exciting defence of his title against challenger Nigel Short. "I think this World Championship match will produce more exciting games than previous matches. My aim is not just to retain the title but to play great games and win convincingly," he told reporters. Kasparov said the remoteness of Linares had enabled him to ignore the storm over his break with the International Chess Federation (FIDE). Commenting on his game against fellow-Russian ex-world champion Anatoly Karpov, he said: "Karpov is not good at resisting strong attacks any more."

Limoges hit back to force playoff

LIMOGES (R) — Limoges came from behind to force a playoff after a 59-53 win over Olympiakos of Greece in their European Clubs' Championship quarter-final Monday. Limoges, who lost the first leg in Greece 70-67 last week, trailed 23-21 at the end of a highly-defensive first half in which their nerves seemed to get the better of them. The French side converted a meagre 30 per cent of their attempted baskets in that period. But the second half was a different affair with Slovene Juri Zdovc inspiring Limoges by example.

Lazio see bright future

ROME (R) — Lazio, inspired by Paul Gascoigne to outplay runaway Italian league leaders AC Milan, are planning to build a super team. "We'll change and renovate our defence (for next season). I have big surprises in mind and we're working to put together a great team," Lazio's delighted President Sergio Cragnotti said after Sunday's 2-2 draw at Rome's Olympic Stadium. "We could have won, you cannot make Milan two presents like that," Cragnotti added after his team's fighting performance. Lazio came back brilliantly after Milan had taken a somewhat fortunate early 2-0 lead with a superb Jean-Pierre Papin goal and a header into his own net by Dutchman Aaron Winter. Milan, beaten for the first time in 11 months when they lost an Italian Cup semifinal tie to AS Roma on the same pitch five days earlier, managed to extend their unbeaten league run to an astonishing 58 matches. But coach Fabio Capello is worried that his players are succumbing to mental fatigue.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HIRSCH
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AT THE RIGHT TIME

Neither vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH ♠ A Q

♥ K J 9 7 4

♦ A K J 4 3

WEST ♠ K 8 4 3 2

♥ J 9

♦ A 10 5 3

♠ 8 5

SOUTH ♠ 9 7 5

♥ Q 5 3 2

♦ Q 2

♠ 9 8 6 2

Ty bidding: West North East South

Pass 1 ♠ 2 ♥ Pass

Pass 3 ♠ Pass 3 NT

Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Jack of ♠

Holdup plays are easy to spot when you possess the ace of the suit led. However, secondary honors can perform the same function if you use your assets wisely.

East's two-heart jump overall was preemptive. With only three queens, South had nothing to say, but when North showed a good, distributional hand by bidding second

suit at the three-level, South gave additional weight to the queens in partner's suits and optimistically elected to try for a nine-trick contract at no trump rather than 11 at clubs.

West led the jack of hearts and East let it run. If declarer wins the queen, the contract will be defeated. Even with the spade finesse working, declarer has only eight running tricks without diamonds. The moment declarer attacks that suit, West can grab the ace and the defenders will then be able to reel off at least four heart tricks for a one-trick set.

The overall and the lead mark East with the ace and king of hearts, so declarer can afford to let the first heart win. The defenders are now helpless. No matter how they continue, declarer will be able to force out the ace of diamonds and come to nine tricks.

Is this a sure-trick line? Almost. For East is unlikely to have made a preemptive jump with an outside ace or king and a six-card suit headed by the two top honors. Still, in these days of off-beat preempts, we are not prepared to offer long odds.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY MARCH 17, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: A very good morning to establish the good neighbour policy where you are living and to show others that you are one who enjoys entertainment and recreation that involve your creative skills.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Look at your assets and see what you can do to increase their value and appearance this morning while tonight go after new idealistic courses for getting ahead.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Personal progress towards material goals is possible after breakfast so delve into possible courses, then get into the financial requirements.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You can think out a campaign to gain your secret longings after which consider the personal part you will play in this drama and make headway.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You have experienced pain which will show you how to get the things you want the most after which put in motion a quiet plan to gain them.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Let one of influence know how that person can further your worldly ambitions after which get your friends and acquaintances to lend a willing hand.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You have some very good ideas for your own personal growth and

development and later you can take them to a high to get out side backing you require.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You can enjoy romantic moments in the morning with your attachment this day before you go out with some new acquaintances who are well informed in your strong views.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Come to a new arrangement about a joint venture with an expert partner and then you will later be able to carry it through to a successful conclusion.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your schedule for the coming days can be well arranged during the morning and the persons you know to have greatest operative skill.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get set on the various good times you anticipate and then you can add to oncoming pleasures by adding some factors not considered before this.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Get your home in the best of shape and condition after which you will be able to join with the persons you like most in all sorts of good times.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get out, see and be with interesting persons and places in the morning and enhance your knowledge, understand; then be happy with your home pleasures.

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen



"You're drinking a toast to me with pizza grease? How disgustingly romantic!"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

YOPPP

YOOST

FOLFAY

YARROS

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: A

Jumbles: EXILE LAPEL STURDY ACCORD

Answer: Something every menu is full of, but which you never order—CALORIES

THE Daily Crossword by Joel Davajan

ACROSS

1 Turfed plants

3 Anchor position

10 Conspire

14 Aleutian island

15 — Los

16 Hazy day

17 Phipps

20 Colleagues

21 Wobble

22 Tach

23 Designer

24 Christian

25 Evergreen tree

27 Debit

28 Dot

31 Gaffer Palmer

32 Letter for

33 Jesus

34 Quite elusive

37 Pewing stone

38 Ancient missile

39 Worker's collective

40 Full of stuff

41 Curb

42 Tricks

43 Actor Leo

44 Domestic

45 Agreement

46 Ancient missile

47 Thrower

48 Sashes

49 Tach

50 Cowboy rope

51 City on the Rhine

52 Without a stitch

53 Sashes

54 Tach

55 Cowboy rope

56 City on the Rhine

57 In the altogether

58 — board

59 Summs or

60 Bowsy

DOWN

1 Gender: abor.

2 Conspire

3 Daze

4 Written below

5 Ethically neutral

6 Small pile

7 Operates

8 — Ray Hutton

9 Persuaders

10 Potential star

11 Border on

12 Portrayal

13 Equal

14 Inept

15 A long time

16 A long time

17 A long time

18 A long time

19 A long time

20 A long time

21 A long time

22 A long time

23 A long time

24 A long time

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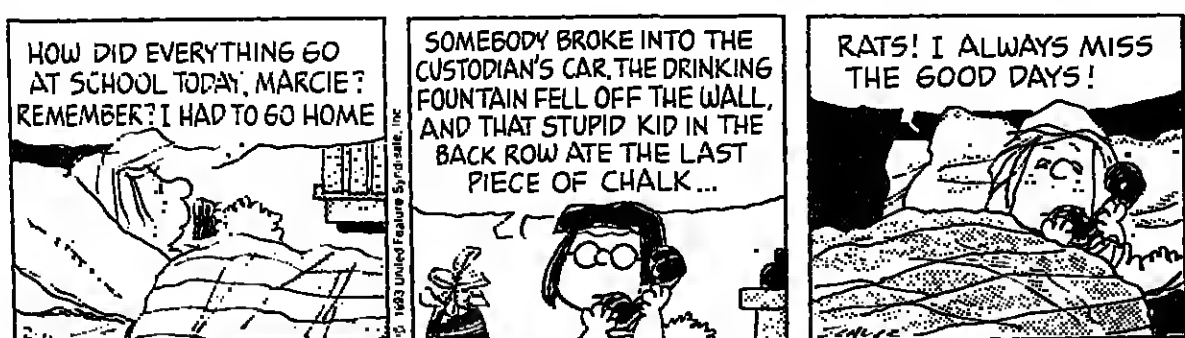
57 A long time

58 A long time

59 A long time

60 A long time

Peanuts



China to boost defence budget

PEKING (R) — China will boost its defence spending by 12.4 per cent in 1993, the fourth year in a row the Communist Party has given a hefty raise to the troops that crushed pro-democracy unrest in 1989.

The increase, announced by Finance Minister Liu Zhongli in parliament Tuesday, compares with a rise of 9.8 per cent for education and 10.8 per cent for science and technology.

Mr. Liu said the national defence budget would rise to 42.5 billion yuan (\$7.5 billion), up from the 37.8 billion yuan (\$6.6 billion) spent last year.

Defence spending ran 2.1 per cent over budget last year, he said.

The defence budget does not count 44.5 billion (\$7.8 billion) allocated for administrative expenses "for building up the national strength."

There were no details as to what that money will be used for. China will dissolve seven of its ministries and establish six new ministries as part of its programme of government restructuring, Xinhua News Agency said Tuesday.

Under the plan submitted to parliament Tuesday, the following seven ministries will be abolished: Ministry of Energy Resources, Ministry of Machinery and Electronics Industry, Ministry of Aerospace Industry, Ministry of Light Industry, Ministry of Textile Industry, Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Materials and Equipment.

The new ministries and a commission with ministerial rank will be: State Economic and Trade Commission, Ministry of Power Industry, Ministry of Coal Industry, Ministry of Machine-Building Industry, Ministry of Electronics Industry and Ministry of Internal Trade.

The Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade will change its name to the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, Xinhua said.

Meanwhile, deputies to China's parliament asked Peking Tuesday to do everything possible to ensure a smooth transition of power in Hong Kong because of the row with London over plans for the British colony.

While the signed statement by 32 deputies from Hong Kong and Macau printed in the People's Daily did not make clear what those measures should be, its publication was clearly intended to rebuff British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, who said London remained ready for talks.

Peking is furious over Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten's plans for more democracy in the territory ahead of its return to Chinese rule in 1997.

"We strongly denounce Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten for his grave acts of repeatedly trampling on Hong Kong's popular will, sabotaging Sino-British cooperation, and disrupting a smooth transfer of power and a smooth transition in Hong Kong," the deputies' statement said.

"We propose that the Chinese government take all necessary contingency measures and make proper preparation to ensure the smooth transfer of power... in Hong Kong."

The deputies said they fully supported Premier Li Peng's warning Monday that Britain would have to bear all responsibility for the serious consequences resulting from the row with London over the democracy plans.

Mr. Patten responded defiantly Tuesday to the blistering attack from Mr. Li, saying debate on the territory's future would go on however strident the blasts from Peking.

Speaking after a meeting of the colonial cabinet, the Executive Council, Mr. Patten did not name names. But he made clear he was replying to Mr. Li, who Monday described Mr. Patten's democratic reforms as a perfidious betrayal of Sino-British agreements.

"I don't intend to use the sort of language which has very often been used about Hong Kong by others," he told reporters when asked to react to Mr. Li's speech at China's parliament.

But he added: "As has been the case consistently for the last few months, whatever the words used about Hong Kong and the Hong Kong governor, we'll continue to discuss the future of Hong Kong positively and constructively."

China began showering Mr. Patten with threats and abuse as soon as he proposed democratic reforms last October, but he has refused to back down despite heavy pressure from the conservative local business community.

Bosnian Serbs promise U.N. convoys can go in

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic assured the U.N.'s top official for refugees Tuesday that blocked relief convoys would be allowed in to trapped Muslim towns in Bosnia, a U.N. spokeswoman said.

She said Mr. Karadzic was telephoned Tuesday by U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata from Geneva and, in the presence of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, had promised to let in a number of convoys that are currently stalled at the border.

UNHCR spokeswoman Lyn-dall Sachs said Mr. Karadzic had also given assurances that aid workers would be let in to the besieged Muslim town of Srebrenica, and that the sick and wounded could be evacuated including combatants, provided they surrendered their arms.

Earlier the UNHCR had said it would not allow a relief convoy to proceed to Srebrenica in east Bosnia after Bosnian Serbs had refused to allow it to have a U.N. military escort or radio communications.

Other U.N. convoys to the Bosnian capital Sarajevo and the Muslim stronghold of Tuzla in northern Bosnia, both under Serb siege for 11 months, were also stalled at the border waiting for clearance from Bosnian Serbs.

Mr. Karadzic, who said Monday that no U.N. military escorts would be allowed on Serb-held territory in Bosnia, was due to fly to New York later Tuesday for

peace talks with Muslim and Croat leaders.

Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic was also flying to New York after being seen off on his way to Sarajevo Airport by a small crowd chanting "Bosnia, Bosnia."

Mr. Sachs said U.N. Commander General Philippe Morillon, who has set up temporary headquarters in Srebrenica in a dramatic bid to press the Serbs to allow in aid, was due to have more talks later Tuesday with deputy Bosnian Serb army commander General Manojlo Milovanovic.

Gen. Milovanovic gave provisional approval Monday for the UNHCR convoy of food and medicine for Srebrenica, packed with refugees from fallen Muslim towns, many sleeping rough, after talks with Gen. Morillon.

In Srebrenica itself the situation was reported to be deteriorating as refugees from fallen Muslim settlements in east Bosnia continued to flood in, many of them wounded.

UNHCR official Larry Hollingworth told his colleagues over a ham radio link from Srebrenica that at least 600 refugees were sleeping rough on the ground at night.

He told UNHCR spokesman Peter Kessler there were children in the streets, babies in their mother's arms and refugees wandering around in the cold without coats.

"He described the scene as Dickensian," Mr. Kessler said,

referring to scenes of poverty and deprivation in 19th-century Britain depicted by author Charles Dickens.

Gen. Morillon has vowed to stay in Srebrenica until its future is secured.

In an interview with French TF-1 television after his talks Monday evening, he said: "I told them (the Serbs) that I had given my word that I would stay in Srebrenica not only until the first convoy goes through, but when I will consider that the population's security is no longer in danger."

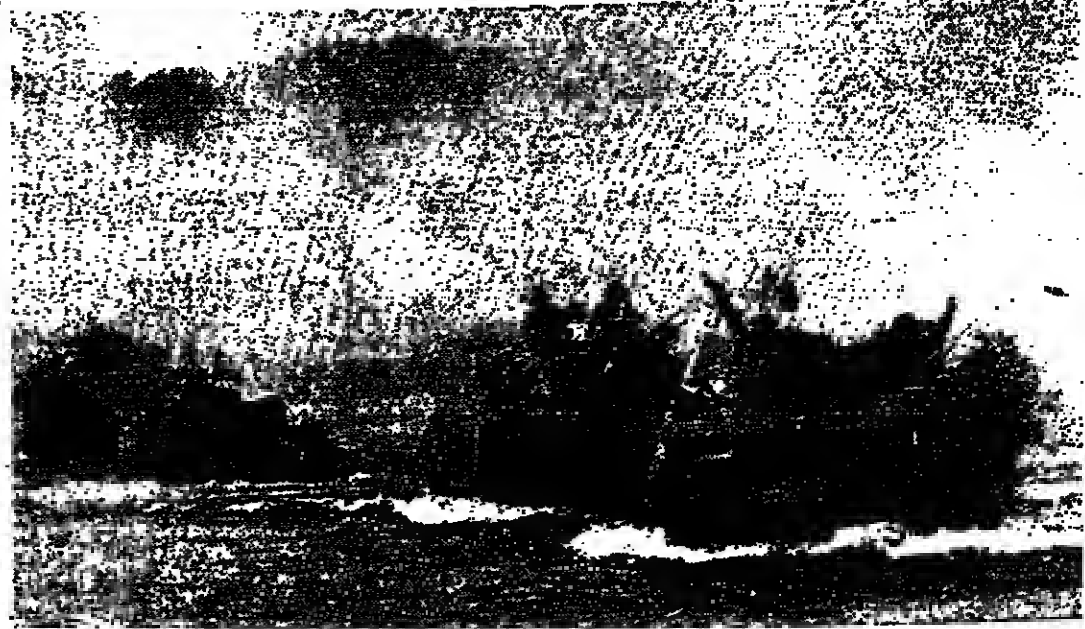
Ms. Ogata was reported by an UNHCR spokesman Tuesday to have sent a message to Gen. Morillon praising him for his "courageous" stand in trying to help the people of Srebrenica.

U.N. officials and relief workers who have visited Srebrenica have reported harrowing scenes.

Food is being parachuted into the area by U.S. aircraft, but there is no distribution system and only the strongest prevail in the scramble to find the aid package.

Refugees are also forced to make a form of bread out of the cores of corn cobs mixed with buds from tree branches and berries. This often caused severe pain or even death.

Meanwhile Prince Charles arrived in this Adriatic port Tuesday to visit British troops serving with U.N. peacekeeping forces in Croatia and in Croat-occupied areas of embattled Bosnia.



South Korean army tanks cross Namhan River during the ongoing Team Spirit joint U.S.-S. Korean military exercises (AFP photo)

N. Korea rejects nuclear arms U-turn

TOKYO (R) — A defiant North Korea, suspected of covertly making nuclear weapons, has poured scorn on those who urge it to quit a nuclear control pact and has threatened to react if Washington applies new pressures.

In a dispatch monitored Tuesday in Tokyo, Pyongyang's news agency said a senior ruling party official had justified the decision to pull out of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a counter to U.S.-led efforts to force open secret military sites.

Communist North Korea's announcement Friday that it would leave the NPT heightened tensions on the Korean peninsula.

Pyongyang had already put its forces and civilian population on a "semi-war" footing in the face of joint U.S.-South Korean military manoeuvres below the border.

Choe Tae-Bok, secretary of the Workers' Party Central Committee, said calls by the United States and its allies for North Korea to go back on its NPT decision were ridiculous.

"If the United States puts new pressure on us under the pretext of (the NPT) pact, ignoring our warnings, we will take a corresponding countermeasure, no matter what pressure it may be," Mr. Choe said in a statement issued by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

"The very ones who compelled us to withdraw from NPT by

making it impossible for us to fulfil our obligations under the treaty are now urging us to 'reconsider' and 'revoke' the decision," he said.

"This does not deserve even a passing note either from the logical or practical point of view."

South Korea said Tuesday it was considering asking the United States to leave behind some of the military forces now holding exercises in the South, a move certain to infuriate the leadership of the North.

"If it becomes necessary, (we are) seriously considering keeping on some of the U.S. forces currently taking part in the Team Spirit exercise," a Seoul Defence Ministry statement said.

The statement did not elaborate on South Korea's latest move to counter the growing of a defiant North Korea, which last week declared a state of "semi-war" and renewed on a global nuclear arms accord.

But news reports said Washington would be asked to delay the departure of Marines normally based on the Japanese island of Okinawa, taking part this month in the Team Spirit exercises.

The aircraft carrier Independence, F-117A Stealth and B-1B bombers currently deployed in South Korea would also be asked to stay on to boost the permanent garrison of 36,000 U.S. troops, the reports said.

The Team Spirit war games, involving more than 120,000

troops from South Korea and the United States, are due to end Thursday, although it will take until the end of April for the last visiting U.S. forces to return home.

South Korea's Defence Minister Kwon Young-Hae said Tuesday the North was trying to buy time to get rid on evidence that it was building nuclear arms.

"We have confirmed that North Korea is hurriedly trying to obliterate evidence by clearing the test site of high explosives at Yongbyon prior to inspections by the agency," he said.

Foreigners have been barred from entering North Korea and most outside communications have been cut off.

President Kim Young-Sam urged the North Tuesday to think again about withdrawing from the NPT. "As president, I strongly urge North Korea to take back its withdrawal from the NPT and allow international nuclear inspections," Mr. Kim said.

U.S. President Bill Clinton said he was "very disturbed" by Pyongyang's move and hoped it would reconsider its withdrawal.

Ri Tchen, Pyongyang's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, said Monday war could break out "at any moment" with its southern neighbour.

South Korea, which says it has ruled out any military action, has put its 640,000 member armed forces on high alert. The two countries are still technically at war.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Italy's Liberal Party chief resigns

ROME (R) — The head of the Liberal Party, a junior partner in the ruling coalition, resigned Tuesday, a day after coming under investigation in Italy's huge corruption scandal, state television reported. Renato Altissimo said in a letter to his party chairman that he was resigning "in order to have a freer hand to defend my honour" and denied that he had ever taken any bribes. Magistrates Monday put Mr. Altissimo under inquiry over allegations he had received kick-backs from the state-owned power utility ENEL. In his letter, Mr. Altissimo said he had been officially notified Tuesday that he was under investigation. As an MP, Mr. Altissimo has immunity from prosecution. "I have never been involved in any cases of corruption or bribes," Mr. Altissimo assured his party.

FBI starts to help in India bomb probe

BOMBAY (AP) — FBI and Interpol agents set to work Tuesday, examining the debris left from a series of bombs that struck this country's financial centre. Indian Home Ministry officials who confirmed the American agents' arrival said they may compare the car bombs used in Bombay with the Feb. 26 explosion at the World Trade Centre in New York. About 300 people were killed and 1,100 wounded in 13 bomb blasts in Bombay last Friday. The New York explosion two weeks earlier killed six and wounded 1,000. In both cities, car bombs exploded in the garages below towers housing major financial institutions and business offices. Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao has said the purpose of the Bombay assault was to undermine India's financial stability and sabotage its efforts to revitalise its economy. But he did not assign blame.

Chinese consul seeks asylum in Sweden

STOCKHOLM (R) — China's consul-general in St. Petersburg and his wife have asked for political asylum in Sweden, a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said Tuesday. "I can confirm that he is in Sweden. He has asked for political asylum," Caroline Fleetwood told Reuters. "He went to the police yesterday to ask for permanent residency. The police will carry out an investigation and then it will be handed over to the immigration board," she said. St. Petersburg Television said Monday that Fan Li Chen and his wife were last seen by their driver after he left them at a restaurant in Russia's second city about midday Saturday. Stockholm police official Nils-Erik Palstedt told the Swedish News Agency (TT) that Mr. Fan and his wife, both in their 50s, arrived from St. Petersburg by ship Monday and are staying at an unnamed hotel.

Fighting intensifies in Abkhazia

MOSCOW (R) — Fighting intensified Tuesday in Georgia's rebel region of Abkhazia and Georgia accused Russian troops of taking the side of Abkhazian separatists. "Heavy fighting is taking place. There are many losses, including among the population," local journalists quoted Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze as telling parliament in the capital Tbilisi. "After today's events I can say that we are facing a conflict between Georgia and Russia," Mr. Shevardnadze, the last foreign minister of the former Soviet Union, said Abkhazian rebels had used Russian planes to bomb the regional capital Sukhumi and were using Russian artillery to launch a major offensive on the Black Sea town. In Moscow, the Defence Ministry press service said Russian troops stationed in the region were neutral in the conflict. Troops deployed in Abkhazia had been put on high alert "due to the aggravation of situation," a spokesman said. They had been ordered to shoot to kill to rebuff any armed attack, irrespective of the nationality of the attackers.

Avalanche, rains kill 63 in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (R) — An avalanche killed at least 28 people when it hit a village in mountainous northwestern Pakistan, government officials said Tuesday. The avalanche, loosened by recent rains, roared down from a glacier and swept away 20 houses in a village in Swat district of North West Frontier Province Sunday, officials added. The dead included 19 children. Radio Pakistan said heavy rains in the past few days killed 35 people and injured eight in the Mardan district of the province.

Cuban president re-elected

HAVANA (R) — Cuban President Fidel Castro was re-elected to what, by his own admission, might be his last five years in office. In a unanimous vote by the National Assembly (parliament) of the Communist-ruled island, the 66-year-old leader was reconfirmed as president of the ruling Council of State. As council president, he is both head of state and government. His brother, Armed Forces Minister Raul Castro, was re-elected as first vice-president of the council. Thirteen other members of the 31-member council were re-elected, while the remaining 16 members appointed were all new reflecting a clear intention to inject new blood and talent into the leadership of the Cuban state. It may be Mr. Castro's last five years in office. On two separate occasions following Cuba's first direct parliamentary elections last Feb. 24, the veteran leader publicly indicated he might prefer to step down in five years' time.

U.N. had 45 days warning of attack on Vietnamese

PHNOM PENH (AP) — Ethnic Vietnamese villagers had told U.N. peacekeepers of threats by Khmer Rouge guerrillas 45 days before the guerrillas slaughtered 33 villagers, U.N. officials said Tuesday.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the peacekeepers responded by patrolling the village, but not enough to secure the area.

Dennis McNamara, head of the peacekeeping mission's human rights unit, said peacekeepers must begin day and night patrols of threatened areas to deter attackers.

"These attacks cannot be allowed to continue," Mr. McNamara said. "There have to be some very serious efforts made by us."

Last Wednesday night, 10 men raided the village of hyuseboats in Siem Reap province in the northwest and fatally shot 33 ethnic Vietnamese, 14 of them children. Another 24 people were injured. It was the bloodiest attack on civilians since the U.N. mission began a year ago.

U.N. spokesman Eric Falt said Tuesday that two Cambodians identified by witnesses as Khmer Rouge guerrillas also were killed. Apparently, they were accidentally shot by fellow guerrillas during the attack.

U.N. officials previously had given slightly different accounts of the casualties.

Boast owners have told U.N. investigators that Khmer Rouge guerrillas forced them at gunpoint to take the guerrillas to the village for the attack.

Witnesses said some of the attackers were Khmer Rouge uniforms.

Canada's Campbell has open field to succeed Mulroney

OTTAWA (R) — A fourth cabinet minister bowed out of the Conservative leadership race Monday leaving Defence Minister Kim Campbell a virtually open field to succeed Brian Mulroney and become Canada's first woman prime minister.

Communications Minister Perrin Beatty announced that he had no chance of winning and threw his support behind the front-runner.

"An unprecedented consensus has developed that one potential candidate, Kim Campbell, best exemplifies the qualities that are needed to lead our party and our country."

Ms. Campbell, 46, an outspoken lawyer and divorcee who shot to the top of the Conservative Party in just five years, is expected to officially launch her campaign next week in her hometown of Vancouver.

If she wins the party leadership at a convention in June as expected Ms. Campbell would become Canada's first head of government born after World War II, following closely in the steps of Bill Clinton in the United

States.

Ms. Campbell's progressive views on social issues — pro-abortion rights, pro-gun control — caused her frictions with the right-wing Conservative caucus as justice minister.

But since Mr. Mulroney's resignation on Feb. 24, she has emerged as the party's best hope to recover from his unpopularity and beat the opposition Liberals in an autumn general election.

MacLean's magazine published a poll Monday that showed her cruising towards a first-ballot victory at the leadership convention backed by 38 per cent of the party, far ahead of Finance Minister Don Mazankowski, who has eight per cent, and Environment Minister Jean Charest with five per cent.

Foreign Minister Barbara McDougall and Employment Minister Bernard Valcourt bowed out of the race over the weekend. Trade Minister Michael Wilson announced he would not run 10 days ago acknowledging that he was too closely associated with Mr. Mulroney's unpopular economic policies to

win an election.

Mr. Charest is the only serious potential contender left and was expected to announce his decision Tuesday at his hometown in eastern Quebec.

But at 34 years of age, the hillingal Quebecer is considered too young to win the leadership this time round.

Some Conservatives fear Ms. Campbell will veer off the course of tight fiscal restraint plotted by Mr. Mulroney and are urging Mr. Mazankowski to run to counter Ms. Campbell's meteoric rise.

But Mr. Mazankowski, a former car dealer from Alberta, speaks no French, a big handicap to winning an election in a country whose prime ministers have come from French-speaking Quebec for 24 of the last 25 years.

Mr. Mazankowski said he will announce his decision later this week, but he indicated he was a "long shot."

"First of all, I don't speak French," he said. "Secondly, I'm perceived as being part of the old guard in the party, and we need a new generation to take over the leadership."

Lawyers willing to plea-bargain in L.A. riot beating case

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Prosecutors and lawyers representing three men charged with the videotaped beating of a white truck driver during last spring's riots said Monday they are willing to formally discuss plea-bargains.

Antoine Miller, Damian Williams and Henry Watson were charged with attempted premeditated murder in the April 29 attack on Reginald Benny.

James Gillen, Mr. Miller's attorney, said outside court he might consider a deal involving an assault charge and a penalty of time already served in jail. The current charges carry life sentences.

Attorneys for the other two and prosecutors also said they were willing to discuss plea bargains.

"The people have made no offer in this case," said Deputy District Attorney Janet Moore. "However, we remain open to any potential offers from the (defendants) and we are not closed to any settlement."

Mr. Benny was pulled from his rig and beaten by several men

before being rescued by passers-by. The beating was recorded by TV news cameras.

The riots were sparked by the acquittal in a state court of four white police officers in the March 3, 1991 videotaped beating of black motorist Rodney King.

The four police officers are now on trial in federal court on civil rights charges stemming from the beating.

The prosecution case against the four white police officers in the Rodney King beating wound down Monday with witnesses called to suggest a cover-up of brutality began with the first police report.

A police traffic supervisor, Sgt. John Amott, testified that officer Laurence Powell's written report didn't match a videotape of the beating and omitted the names of civilian witnesses who might provide details.

Sgt. Amott said the report also omitted the names of two passengers in Mr. King's car and didn't mention that Mr. King was kicked, stomped and grabbed repeatedly after a traffic chase.

Defence attorneys, meanwhile, filed motions with the judge seeking immediate acquittal of the policemen on grounds that the government has not proved federal civil rights charges.

Sgt. Stacey Koon's attorney, Ira Salzmann, said prosecutors failed to prove "malicious" or "sadistic" intent to violate Mr. King's civil rights.

The March 3, 1991, beating of the black motorist was videotaped by an amateur cameraman who offered it to a TV news programme. Sgt. Amott said that when he saw the tape he noticed it did not match officer Powell's report submitted hours after the beating.

"I didn't think what I saw on the tape was reflected in the report," Sgt. Amott said, noting he reported the conflict to detectives assigned to investigate the use of force.

Portions of the report read to jurors showed that Officer Powell depicted Mr. King as a hostile, charging suspect exhibiting bizarre behaviour associated with the

drug PCP.

The defendant was unable to answer questions about what happened and was hostile. His hostile demeanor continued for approximately an hour," the report said of his arrival at Los Angeles County (USC) Medical Centre.

But nurse Martha Esparza testified before Sgt. Amott took the stand that she interviewed Mr. King when he arrived at the jail ward of the hospital and found him "calm and cooperative." She said he told her he had been beaten.

Other medical witnesses also described Mr. King as calm and coherent.

Sgt. Amott said that neither Officer Powell nor his partner, officer Timothy Wind, asked for a blood or urine sample from Mr. King to detect any drugs or alcohol.

The symptoms of PCP intoxication have become central to the officer's federal trial because the defendants say they presumed Mr. King was on the drugs and thus was dangerous.

COLUMN

Nude Diana cartoons axed after outcry

LONDON (R) — Cartoons depicting a nude Princess Diana have been dropped from a British television documentary after an outcry among royalists who said the drawings were an affront to public decency. The artists' impressions of the estranged wife of heir to the throne Prince Charles in various states of undress were commissioned for Diana Undressed, a documentary due to be broadcast about the princess's sex appeal. A spokesman for Channel 4 television said Monday that senior executives had decided that cartoons of the princess in the nude were considered "inappropriate and unnecessary to get over the message of the programme." But the spokesman said one brief cartoon sequence of the 31-year-old princess doing a striptease for her underwear would still be broadcast. Selected pictures from the programme appeared on the front page of a top-selling British tabloid newspaper Friday. The documentary, presented by feminist author Camille Paglia, has been billed as a serious look at Diana's elevation from English aristocrat to worldwide "sex symbol." The cartoons have been condemned by several Conservative politicians as "exceeding the realms of common decency."

Borneo official in soup over birds' nest monopoly

JAKARTA (R) — A Dayak tribesman in Indonesian Borneo is suing a district official for squeezing him out of a lucrative business in birds' nests, the Jakarta Post said. The suit, filed in a Jakarta court, calls for the annulment of a four-month old decree that turns the collection and sale of the nests over to a local businessman. The villager is being represented by the Legal Aid Institute, Indonesia's leading human rights group. The prized swallows' nests, found in caves, are in demand for local medicines and an expensive Chinese soup.

Entrepreneur gambles on royal flush

NEW YORK (R) — A Dallas businessman sniffs opportunity in the troubles of Britain's royal family and hopes to capitalise with a new set of trading cards. Victor Shaffer, president of company called Press Pass, said the cards, to hit the market soon, are the first to be devoted to the lives of Britain's royals. The 110-card royal family collection will feature photos and illustrations depicting incidents from the lives of the royals with tabloid-style copy. While some of the cards are a bit "saucy," Mr. Shaffer said the new cards will avoid sensational tabloid-style items.

'Jack the stripper' jailed for 12 years in Britain

LONDON (R) — A British sex attacker dubbed "Jack the stripper" who preyed on prostitutes in an English coastal town was jailed for 12 years. The court in Plymouth, southwest England, heard that 26-year-old Nicholas Harding, a trainee shop manager, waged an eight-month "campaign of terror" in which he raped and tried to strangle one of his victims. Two others were stripped, bound with tape and dumped in isolated areas, the court was told. Judge William Taylor, passing sentence, said: "I am in no doubt that you pose a significant danger to women." The nickname "Jack the stripper" recalls Britain's most famous serial killer, "Jack the ripper," who prowled the streets of London in the 1890s and was never caught.

Japanese buddhist monks open bar in Osaka

OSAKA (R) — A group of buddhist priests has opened a bar in western Japan to try to meet people shying away from religion, the daily Asahi Shimbun reported. The bar, which opened in December in the heart of Osaka's Minami entertainment district, is run by 15 Buddhist priests. Fumihiko Kiyoshi, the group's spokesman, said he and his fellow clergymen were dismayed at how Buddhism was no longer a part of people's lives in Japan. "Over the centuries, people drifted away from Buddhism," he said. "Since people no longer come to us, we thought we'd go to them. That's why we chose to set up shop here," he said. Over the counter, which seats eight people, customers can chat with monks about religious or personal matters. An upstairs room is available for larger groups.